

# AFRICANUS JOURNAL

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# Mentoring Scholars in a New Millennium

## THE JULIUS AFRICANUS GUILD

was created at the Boston campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with the purpose of identifying and nurturing evangelical minority doctoral students with the potential to impact the global Body of Christ significantly through their scholarship.

The Guild exists as a Ph.D. research support and mentoring program in collaboration with schools such as London School of Theology in England. The context of the Guild is urban and multicultural with an emphasis on developing scholars who can address difficult issues facing the church today with a commitment to the inerrancy of Scriptures and the contextual application of the principles found therein.

*“I am eternally grateful to the Africanus Guild, which has helped me fulfill God’s call and realize a personal dream. I could not be working on my PhD in Old Testament without the financial help, prayers, and educational support I receive through the Guild.”*

—QUONEKUIA DAY

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## 1. Goals of *The Africanus Journal*

*The Africanus Journal* is an academic, multilingual journal. Its goals are to promote:

a. the mission and work of the members and mentors of the Africanus Guild Ph.D. Research Program of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, based on the Boston campus (the Center for Urban Ministerial Education [CUME]).

b. the principles of the Africanus Guild (evangelical orthodox Christian men and women who are multicultural, multiracial, urban-oriented, studying a Bible without error in a cooperative way).

Scholarly papers may be submitted normally by those who are in a Th.M., D.Min., Ph.D. program or have a Th.M., D.Min., Ph.D., Ed.D. or equivalent degree.

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## 2. Life of Julius Africanus

Julius Africanus was probably born in Jerusalem, many scholars think, around A.D. 200. Africanus was considered by the ancients as a man of consummate learning and sharpest judgment (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* 6:128). He was a pupil of Heracles, distinguished for philosophy and other Greek learning, in Alexandria, Egypt around A.D. 231-233. In A.D. 220/226 he performed some duty in behalf of Nicopolis (formerly Emmaus) in Palestine. Later he likely became bishop of Emmaus (Eusebius, *History*, VI.xxxi.2). Origen calls him “a beloved brother in God the Father, through Jesus Christ, His holy Child” (*Letter from Origen to Africanus* 1). Fellow historian Eusebius distinguishes him as “no ordinary historian” (*History*, I. vi.2). Eusebius describes the five books of *Chronologies* as a “monument of labor and accuracy” and cites extensively from his harmony of the evangelists’ genealogies (*History*, VI. xxxi. 1-3). Africanus was a careful historian who sought to defend the truth of the Bible. He is an ancient example of meticulous, detailed scholarship which is historical, biblical, truthful, and devout.

Even though Eusebius describes Africanus as the author of the *Kestoi*, Jerome makes no mention of this (*ANF* 6:124). The author of the *Kestoi* is surnamed Sextus, probably a Libyan philosopher who arranged a library in the Pantheon at Rome for the Emperor. The *Kestoi* was probably written toward the end of the 200s. It was not written by a Christian since it contains magical incantations (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* III.412).

The Greek text of Africanus’ writings may be found in Martinus Josephus Routh, *Reliquiae sacrae* II (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974 [1846]), 225-309, and Martin Wallraff, Umberto Roberto, Karl Pinggéra, eds., William Adler, trans., *Iulius Africanus Chronographiae: The Extant Fragments, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* 15 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

## 3. Editorial team

Quonekuia Day, Benjamin Fung, Matthew Mascioli, Alvin Padilla, Nicole Rim, John Runyon, Aída Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer.

## 4. Resources

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5. Please note that each author is solely legally responsible for the content and the accuracy of facts, citations, references, and quotations rendered and properly attributed in the article appearing under his or her name. Neither Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the Africanus Guild, nor the editorial team is responsible or legally liable for any content or any statements made by any author, but the legal responsibility is solely that author’s once an article appears in *The Africanus Journal*.

## 6. Summary of Content

The inauguration issue contains Julius Africanus’ writings and contemporary reflections and applications on his works, and a book review.



# THE EXTANT WRITINGS OF JULIUS AFRICANUS

## I.—THE EPISTLE TO ARISTIDES

### [AFRICANUS ON THE GENEALOGY IN THE HOLY GOSPELS.]

#### I.

—Some indeed incorrectly allege that this discrepant enumeration and mixing of the names both of priestly men, as they think, and royal, was made properly, in order that Christ might be shown rightfully to be both Priest and King; as if any one disbelieved this, or had any other hope than this, that Christ is the High Priest of His Father, who presents our prayers to Him, and a supramundane King, who rules by the Spirit those whom He has delivered, a co-operator in the government of all things. And this is announced to us not by the catalogue of the tribes, nor by the mixing of the registered generations, but by the patriarchs and prophets. Let us not therefore descend to such religious trifling as to establish the kingship and priesthood of Christ by the interchanges of the names. For the priestly tribe of Levi, too, was allied with the kingly tribe of Juda, through the circumstance that Aaron married Elizabeth the sister of Naasson, and that Eleazar again married the daughter of Phatiel, and begat children. The evangelists, therefore, would thus have spoken falsely, affirming what was not truth, but a fictitious commendation. And for this reason the one traced the pedigree of Jacob the father of Joseph from David through Solomon; the other traced that of Heli also, though in a different way, the father of Joseph, from Nathan the son of David. And they ought not indeed to have been ignorant that both orders of the ancestors enumerated are the generation of David, the royal tribe of Juda. For if Nathan was a prophet, so also was Solomon, and so too the father of both of them; and there were prophets belonging to many of the tribes, but priests belonging to none of the tribes, save the Levites only. To no purpose, then, is this fab-rication of theirs. Nor shall an assertion of this kind prevail in the Church of Christ against the exact truth, so as that a lie should be contrived for the praise and glory of Christ. For who does not know that most holy word of the apostle also, who, when he was preaching and proclaiming the resurrection of our Saviour, and confidently affirming the truth, said with great fear, “If any say that Christ is not risen, and we assert and have believed this, and both hope for and preach that very thing, we are false witnesses of God, in alleging that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up?” And if he who glorifies God the Father is thus afraid lest he should seem a false witness in narrating a marvelous fact, how should not he be justly afraid, who tries to establish the truth by a false statement, preparing an untrue opinion? For if the generations are different, and trace down no genuine seed to Joseph, and if all has been stated only with the view of establishing the position of Him who was to be born- to confirm the truth, namely, that He who was to be would be king and priest, there being at the same time no proof given, but the dignity of the words being brought down to a feeble hymn, - it is evident that no praise accrues to God from that, since it is a falsehood, but rather judgment returns on him who asserts it, because he vaunts an unreality as though it were reality. Therefore, that we may expose the ignorance also of him who speaks thus, and prevent any one from stumbling at this folly, I shall set forth the true history of these matters.]

#### II.

For whereas in Israel the names of their generations were enumerated either according to nature or according to law, —according to nature, indeed, by the succession of legitimate offspring, and according to law whenever another raised up children to the name of a brother dying

childless; for because no clear hope of resurrection was yet given them, they had a representation of the future promise in a kind of mortal resurrection, with the view of perpetuating the name of one deceased; - whereas, then, of those entered in this genealogy, some succeeded by legitimate descent as son to father, while others begotten in one family were introduced to another in name, mention is therefore made of both— of those who were progenitors in fact, and of those who were so only in name. Thus neither of the evangelists is in error, as the one reckons by nature and the other by law. For the several generations, viz., those descending from Solomon and those from Nathan, were so intermingled by the raising up of children to the childless, and by second marriages, and the raising up of seed, that the same persons are quite justly reckoned to belong at one time to the one, and at another to the other, i.e., to their reputed or to their actual fathers. And hence it is that both these accounts are true, and come down to Joseph, with considerable intricacy indeed, but yet quite accurately.

### III.

But in order that what I have said may be made evident, I shall explain the interchange of the generations. If we reckon the generations from David through Solomon, Matthan is found to be the third from the end, who begat Jacob the father of Joseph. But if, with Luke, we reckon them from Nathan the son of David, in like manner the third from the end is Melchi, whose son was Heli the father of Joseph. For Joseph was the son of Heli, the son of Melchi. As Joseph, therefore, is the object proposed to us, we have to show how it is that each is represented as his father, both Jacob as descending from Solomon, and Heli as descending from Nathan: first, how these two, Jacob and Heli, were brothers; and then also how the fathers of these, Matthan and Melchi, being of different families, are shown to be the grandfathers of Joseph. Well, then, Matthan and Melchi, having taken the same woman to wife in succession, begat children who were uterine brothers, as the law did not prevent a widow, whether such by divorce or by the death of her husband, from marrying another. By Estha, then—for such is her name according to tradition—Matthan first, the descendant of Solomon, begets Jacob; and on Matthan's death, Melchi, who traces his descent back to Nathan, being of the same tribe but of another family, having married her, as has been already said, had a son Heli. Thus, then, we shall find Jacob and Heli uterine brothers, though of different families. And of these, the one Jacob having taken the wife of his brother Heli, who died childless, begat by her the third, Joseph—his son by nature and by account. Whence also it is written, "And Jacob begat Joseph." But according to law he was the son of Heli, for Jacob his brother raised up seed to him. Wherefore also the genealogy deduced through him will not be made void, which the Evangelist Matthew in his enumeration gives thus: "And Jacob begat Joseph." But Luke, on the other hand, says, "Who was the son, as was supposed (for this, too, he adds), of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Melchi." For it was not possible more distinctly to state the generation according to law; and thus in this mode of generation he has entirely omitted the word "begat" to the very end, carrying back the genealogy by way of conclusion to Adam and to God.

### IV.

Nor indeed is this incapable of proof, neither is it a rash conjecture. For the kinsmen of the Saviour after the flesh, whether to magnify their own origin or simply to state the fact, but at all events speaking truth, have also handed down the following account: Some Idumean robbers attacking Ascalon, a city of Palestine, besides other spoils which they took from a temple of Apollo, which was built near the walls, carried off captive one Antipater, son of a certain Herod, a servant of the temple. And as the priest was not able to pay the ransom for his son, Antipater was brought up in the customs of the Idumeans, and afterwards enjoyed the friendship of Hyrcanus, the high priest of Judea. And being sent on an embassy to Pompey on behalf of Hyrcanus, and having restored to him the kingdom which was being wasted by Aristobulus his brother, he was so

fortunate as to obtain the title of procurator of Palestine. And when Antipater was treacherously slain through envy of his great good fortune, his son Herod succeeded him, who was afterwards appointed king of Judea under Antony and Augustus by a decree of the senate. His sons were Herod and the other tetrarchs. These accounts are given also in the histories of the Greeks.

## V.

But as up to that time the genealogies of the Hebrews had been registered in the public archives, and those, too, which were traced back to the proselytes— as, for example, to Achior the Ammanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, and those who left Egypt along with the Israelites, and intermarried with them—Herod, knowing that the lineage of the Israelites contributed nothing to him, and goaded by the consciousness of his ignoble birth, burned the registers of their families. This he did, thinking that he would appear to be of noble birth, if no one else could trace back his descent by the public register to the patriarchs or proselytes, and to that mixed race called *georae*. A few, however, of the studious, having private records of their own, either by remembering the names or by getting at them in some other way from the archives, pride themselves in preserving the memory of their noble descent; and among these happen to be those already mentioned, called *desposyni*, on account of their connection with the family of the Saviour. And these coming from Nazara and Cochaba, Judean villages, to other parts of the country, set forth the above-named genealogy as accurately as possible from the Book of Days. Whether, then, the case stand thus or not, no one could discover a more obvious explanation, according to my own opinion and that of any sound judge. And let this suffice us for the matter, although it is not supported by testimony, because we have nothing more satisfactory or true to allege upon it. The Gospel, however, in any case states the truth.

## VI.

Matthan, descended from Solomon, begat Jacob. Matthan dying, Melchi, descended from Nathan, begat Heli by the same wife. Therefore Heli and Jacob are uterine brothers. Heli dying childless, Jacob raised up seed to him and begat Joseph, his own son by nature, but the son of Heli by law. Thus Joseph was the son of both.

Eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers* 6 (Peabody: Hendrikson), 125-127.

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## II. — THE EXTANT FRAGMENTS OF THE FIVE BOOKS OF THE CHRONOGRAPHY OF JULIUS AFRICANUS

### I.

#### *On the Mythical Chronology of the Egyptians and Chaldeans.*

The Egyptians, indeed, with their boastful notions of their own antiquity, have put forth a sort of account of it by the hand of their astrologers in cycles and myriads of years; which some of those who have had the repute of studying such subjects profoundly have in a summary way called lunar years; and inclining no less than others to the mythical, *they think they* fall in with the eight or nine thousands of years which the Egyptian priests in Plato falsely reckon up to Solon... .

For why should I speak of the three myriad years of the Phoenicians, or of the follies of the Chaldeans, their forty-eight myriads? For the Jews, deriving their origin from them as descendants of Abraham, having been taught a modest mind, and one such as becomes men, together with the truth by the spirit of Moses, have handed down to us, by their extant Hebrew histories, the number of 5500 years as the period up to the advent of the Word of salvation, that was announced to the world in the time of the sway of the Caesars.

### II.

When men multiplied on the earth, the angels of heaven came together with the daughters of men. In some copies I found “the sons of God.” What is meant by the Spirit, in my opinion, is that the descendants of Seth are called the sons of God on account of the righteous men and patriarchs who have sprung from him, even down to the Saviour Himself; but that the descendants of Cain are named the seed of men, as having nothing divine in them, on account of the wickedness of their race and the inequality of their nature, being a mixed people, and having stirred the indignation of God. But if it is thought that these refer to angels, we must take them to be those who deal with magic and jugglery, who taught the women the motions of the stars and the knowledge of things celestial, by whose power they conceived the giants as their children, by whom wickedness came to its height on the earth, until God decreed that the whole race of the living should perish in their impiety by the deluge.

### III.

Adam, when 230 years old, begets Seth; and after living other 700 years he died, that is, a second death. Seth, when 205 years old, begat Enos; from Adam therefore to the birth of Enos there are 435 years in all. Enos, when 190 years old, begets Cainan. Cainan again, when 170 years old, begets Malaleel; And Malaleel, when 165 years old; begets Jared; And Jared, when 162 years old, begets Enoch; And Enoch, when 165 years old, begets Mathusala; and having pleased God, after a life of other 200 years, he was not found. Mathusala, when 187 years old, begat Lamech. Lamech, when 188 years old, begets Noe.

### IV.

#### *On the Deluge*

God decreed to destroy the whole race of the living by a flood, having threatened that men should not survive beyond 120 years. Nor let it be deemed a matter of difficulty, because some lived afterwards a longer period than that. For the space of time meant was 100 years up to the flood in the case of the sinners of that time; for they were 20 years old. God instructed Noe, who pleased him on account of his righteousness, to prepare an ark; and when it was finished, there entered it Noe himself and his sons, his wife and his daughters-in-law, and firstlings of every living creature, with a view to the duration of the race. And Noe was 600 years old when the flood came on. And

when the water abated, the ark settled on the mountains of Ararat, which we know to be in Parthia; but some say that they are at Celaenae of Phrygia, and I have seen both places. And the flood prevailed for a year, and then the earth became dry. And they came out of the ark in pairs, as may be found, and not in the manner in which they had entered, viz., distinguished according to their species, and were blessed by God. And each of these things indicates something useful to us.

#### V.

Noe was 600 years old when the flood came on. From Adam, therefore, to Noe and the flood, are 2262 years.

#### VI.

And after the flood, Sem begat Arphaxad. Arphaxad, when 135 years old, begets Sala in the year 2397. Sala, when 130 years old, begets Heber in the year 2527. Heber, when 134 years old, begets Phalec in the year 2661, so called because the earth was divided in his days. Phalec, when 130 years old, begat Ragan, and after living other 209 years died.

#### VII.

In the year of the world 3277, Abraham entered the promised land of Canaan.

#### VIII.

*Of Abraham.*

From this rises the appellation of the *Hebrews*. For the word *Hebrews* is interpreted to mean *those who migrate across*, viz., who crossed the Euphrates with Abraham; and it is not derived, as some think, from the fore-mentioned Heber. From the flood and Noe, therefore, to Abraham's entrance into the promised land, there are in all 1015 years; and from Adam, in 20 generations, 3277 years.

#### IX.

*Of Abraham and Lot.*

When a famine pressed the land of Canaan, Abraham came down to Egypt; and fearing lest he should be put out of the way on account of the beauty of his wife, he pretended that he was her brother. But Pharaoh took her to himself when she was commended to him; for this is the name the Egyptians give their kings. And he was punished by God; and Abraham, along with all pertaining to him, was dismissed enriched. In Canaan, Abraham's shepherds and Lot's contended with each other; and with mutual consent they separated, Lot choosing to dwell in Sodom on account of the fertility and beauty of the land, which had five cities, Sodom, Gomorrah, Adama, Seboim, Segor, and as many kings. On these their neighbours the four Syrian kings made war, whose leader was Chodollogomor king of Aelam. And they met by the Salt Sea, which is now called the Dead Sea. In it I have seen very many wonderful things. For that water sustains no living thing, and dead bodies are carried beneath its depths, while the living do not readily even dip under it. Lighted torches are borne upon it, but when extinguished they sink. And there are the springs of bitumen; and it yields alum and salt a little different from the common kinds, for they are pungent and transparent. And wherever fruit is found about it, it is found full of a thick, foul smoke. And the water acts as a cure to those who use it, and it is drained in a manner contrary to any other water. And if it had not the river Jordan feeding it like a shell, and to a great extent withstanding its tendency, it would have failed more rapidly than appears. There is also by it a great quantity of the balsam plant; but it is supposed to have been destroyed by God on account of the impiety of the neighbouring people.

## X.

### *Of the Patriarch Jacob.*

1. The shepherd's tent belonging to Jacob, which was preserved at Edessa to the time of Antonine Emperor of the Romans, was destroyed by a thunderbolt.
2. Jacob, being displeased at what had been done by Symeon and Levi at Shecem against the people of the country, on account of the violation of their sister, buried at Shecem the gods which he had with him near a rock under the wonderful terebinth, which up to this day is revered by the neighbouring people in honour of the patriarchs, and removed thence to Bethel. By the trunk of this terebinth there was an altar on which the inhabitants of the country offered *ectenae* in their general assemblies; and though it seemed to be burned, it was not consumed. Near it is the tomb of Abraham and Isaac. And some say that the staff of one of the angels who were entertained by Abraham was planted there.

## XI.

From Adam, therefore, to the death of Joseph, according to this book, are 23 generations, and 3563 years.

## XII.

From this record, therefore, we affirm that Ogygus, from whom the first flood (in Attica) derived its name, and who was saved when many perished, lived at the time of the exodus of the people from Egypt along with Moses. ....And after Ogygus, on account of the vast destruction caused by the flood, the present land of Attica remained without a king till the time of Cecrops, 189 years. Philochorus, however, affirms that Ogygus, Actaeus, or whatever other fictitious name is adduced, never existed. ....From Ogygus to Cyrus, as from Moses to his time, are 1235 years.

## XIII.

1. Up to the time of the Olympiads there is no certain history among the Greeks, all things before that date being confused, and in no way consistent with each other. But these *Olympiads* were thoroughly investigated by many, as the Greeks made up the records of their history not according to long spaces, but in periods of four years. For which reason I shall select the most remarkable of the mythical narratives before the time of the first Olympiad, and rapidly run over them. But those after that period, at least those that are notable, I shall take together, Hebrew events in connection with Greek, according to their dates, examining carefully the affairs of the Hebrews, and touching more cursorily on those of the Greeks; and my plan will be as follows: Taking up some single event in Hebrew history synchronous with another in Greek history, and keeping by it as the main subject, subtracting or adding as may seem needful in the narrative, I shall note what Greek or Persian of note, or remarkable personage of any other nationality, flourished at the date of that event in Hebrew history; and thus I may perhaps attain the object which I propose to myself.

2. The most famous exile that befell the Hebrews, then—to wit, when they were led captive by Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon—lasted 70 years, as Jeremias had prophesied. Berosus the Babylonian, moreover, makes mention of Nabuchodonosor. And after the 70 years of captivity, Cyrus became king of the Persians at the time of the 55th Olympiad, as may be ascertained from the *Bibliothecae* of Diodorus and the histories of Thallus and Castor, and also from Polybius and Phlegon, and others besides these, who have made the Olympiads a subject of study. For the date is a matter of agreement among them all. And Cyrus then, in the first year of his reign, which was the first year of the 55th Olympiad, effected the first partial restoration of the people by the hand of Zorobabel, with whom also was Jesus the son of Josedec, since the period of 70 years was now fulfilled, as is narrated in Esdra the Hebrew historian. The narratives of the beginning of the

sovereignty of Cyrus and the end of the captivity accordingly coincide. And thus, according to the reckoning of the Olympiads, there will be found a like harmony of events even to our time. And by following this, we shall also make the other narratives fit in with each other in the same manner.

3. But if the Attic time-reckoning is taken as the standard for affairs prior to these, then from Ogygus, who was believed by them to be an autochthon, in whose time also the first great flood took place in Attica, while Phoroneus reigned over the Argives, as Acusilaus relates, up to the date of the first Olympiad, from which period the Greeks thought they could fix dates accurately, there are altogether 1020 years; which number both coincides with the above-mentioned, and will be established by what follows. For these things are also recorded by the Athenian historians Hellanicus and Philochorus, who record Attic affairs; and by Castor and Thallus, who record Syrian affairs; and by Diodorus, who writes a universal history in his *Bibliothecae*; and by Alexander Polyhistor, and by some of our own time, yet more carefully, and by all the Attic writers. Whatever narrative of note, therefore, meets us in these 1020 years, shall be given in its proper place.

4. In accordance with this writing, therefore, we affirm that Ogygus, who gave his name to the first flood, and was saved when many perished, lived at the time of the exodus of the people from Egypt along with Moses. And this we make out in the following manner. From Ogygus up to the first Olympiad already mentioned, it will be shown that there are 1020 years; and from the first Olympiad to the first year of the 55th, that is the first year of King Cyrus, which was also the end of the captivity, are 217 years. From Ogygus, therefore, to Cyrus are 1237. And if one carries the calculation backwards from the end of the captivity, there are 1237 years. Thus, by analysis, the same period is found to the first year of the exodus of Israel under Moses from Egypt, as from the 55th Olympiad to Ogygus, who founded Eleusis. And from this point we get a more notable beginning for Attic chronography.

5. So much, then, for the period prior to Ogygus. And at his time Moses left Egypt. And we demonstrate in the following manner how reliable is the statement that this happened at that date. From the exodus of Moses up to Cyrus, who reigned after the captivity, are 1237 years. For the remaining years of Moses are 40. The years of Jesus, who led the people after him, are 25; those of the elders, who were judges after Jesus, are 30; those of the judges, whose history is given in the book of Judges, are 490; those of the priests Eli and Samuel are 90; those of the successive kings of the Hebrews are 490. *Then come the 70 years of the captivity*, the last year of which was the first year of the reign of Cyrus, as we have already said.

6. And from Moses, then, to the first Olympiad there are 1020 years, as to the first year of the 55th Olympiad from the same are 1237, in which enumeration the reckoning of the Greeks coincides with us. And after Ogygus, by reason of the vast destruction caused by the flood, the present land of Attica remained without a king up to Cecrops, a period of 189 years. For Philochorus asserts that the Actaeus who is said to have succeeded Ogygus, or whatever other fictitious names are adduced, never existed. *And again:* From Ogygus, therefore, to Cyrus, *says he*, the same period is reckoned as from Moses to the same date, viz., 1237 years; and some of the Greeks also record that Moses lived at that same time. Polemo, for instance, in the first book of his *Greek History*, says: In the time of Apis, son of Phoroneus, a division of the army of the Egyptians left Egypt, and settled in the Palestine called Syrian, not far from Arabia: these are evidently those who were with Moses. And Apion the son of Poseidonius, the most laborious of grammarians, in his book *Against the Jews*, and in the fourth book of his *History*, says that in the time of Inachus king of Argos, when Amosis reigned over Egypt, the Jews revolted under the leadership of Moses. And Herodotus also makes mention of this revolt, and of Amosis, in his second book, and in a certain way also of the Jews themselves, reckoning them among the circumcised, and calling them the Assyrians of Palestine, perhaps through Abraham. And Ptolemy the Mendesian, who narrates the history of the Egyptians from the earliest times, gives the same account of all these things; so that among them in

general there is no difference worth notice in the chronology.

7. It should be observed, further, that all the legendary accounts which are deemed specially remarkable by the Greeks by reason of their antiquity, are found to belong to a period posterior to Moses; such as their floods and conflagrations, Prometheus, Io, Europa, the Sparti, the abduction of Proserpine, their mysteries, their legislations, the deeds of Dionysus, Perseus, the Argonauts, the Centaurs, the Minotaur, the affairs of Troy, the labours of Hercules, the return of the Heraclidae, the Ionian migration and the Olympiads. And it seemed good to me to give an account especially of the before-noted period of the Attic sovereignty, as I intend to narrate the history of the Greeks side by side with that of the Hebrews. For any one will be able, if he only start from my position, to make out the reckoning equally well with me. Now, in the first year of that period of 1020 years, stretching from Moses and Ogygus to the first Olympiad, the passover and the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt took place, and also in Attica the flood of Ogygus. And that is according to reason. For when the Egyptians were being smitten in the anger of God with hail and storms, it was only to be expected that certain parts of the earth should suffer with them; and, in especial, it was but to be expected that the Athenians should participate in such calamity with the Egyptians, since they were supposed to be a colony from them, as Theopompus alleges in his *Tricarenum*, and others besides him. The intervening period has been passed by, as no remarkable event is recorded during it among the Greeks. But after 94 years Prometheus arose, according to some, who was fabulously reported to have formed men; for being a wise man, he transformed them from the state of extreme rudeness to culture.

#### XIV.

Aeschylus, the son of Agamestor, ruled the Athenians twenty-three years, in whose time Joatham reigned in Jerusalem. And our canon brings Joatham king of Juda within the first Olympiad.

#### XV.

*And Africanus, in the third book of his History, writes:* Now the first Olympiad recorded—which, however, was really the fourteenth—was the period when Coroebus was victor; at that time Ahaz was in the first year of his reign in Jerusalem. *Then in the fourth book he says:* It is therefore with the first year of the reign of Ahaz that we have shown the first Olympiad to fall in.

#### XVI.

*On the Seventy Weeks of Daniel*

1. This passage, therefore, as it stands thus, touches on many marvellous things. At present, however, I shall speak only of those things in it which bear upon chronology, and matters connected therewith. That the passage speaks then of the advent of Christ, who was to manifest Himself after seventy weeks, is evident. For in the Saviour's time, or from Him, are transgressions abrogated, and sins brought to an end. And through remission, moreover, are iniquities, along with offences, blotted out by expiation; and an everlasting righteousness is preached, different from that which is by the law, and visions and prophecies (are) until John, and the Most Holy is anointed. For before the advent of the Saviour these things were not yet, and were therefore only looked for. And the beginning of the numbers, that is, of the seventy weeks which make up 490 years, the angel instructs us to take from the going forth of the commandment to answer and to build Jerusalem. And this happened in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia. For Nehemiah his cup-bearer besought him, and received the answer that Jerusalem should be built. And the word went forth commanding these

things; for up to that time the city was desolate. For when Cyrus, after the seventy years' captivity, gave free permission to all to return who desired it, some of them under the leadership of Jesus the high priest and Zorobabel, and others after these under the leadership of Esdra, returned, but were prevented at first from building the temple, and from surrounding the city with a wall, on the plea that that had not been commanded.

2. It remained in this position, accordingly, until Nehemiah and the reign of Artaxerxes, and the 115th year of the sovereignty of the Persians. And from the capture of Jerusalem that makes 185 years. And at that time King Artaxerxes gave order that the city should be built; and Nehemiah being despatched, superintended the work, and the street and the surrounding wall were built, as had been prophesied. And reckoning from that point, we make up seventy weeks to the time of Christ. For if we begin to reckon from any other point, and not from this, the periods will not correspond, and very many odd results will meet us. For if we begin the calculation of the seventy weeks from Cyrus and the first restoration, there will be upwards of one hundred years too many, and there will be a larger number if we begin from the day on which the angel gave the prophecy to Daniel, and a much larger number still if we begin from the commencement of the captivity. For we find the sovereignty of the Persians comprising a period of 230 years, and that of the Macedonians extending over 370 years, and from that to the 16th year of Tiberius Caesar is a period of about 60 years.

3. It is by calculating from Artaxerxes, therefore, up to the time of Christ that the seventy weeks are made up, according to the numeration of the Jews. For from Nehemiah, who was despatched by Artaxerxes to build Jerusalem in the 115th year of the Persian empire, and the 4th year of the 83d Olympiad, and the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Artaxerxes himself, up to this date, which was the second year of the 202d Olympiad, and the 16th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, there are reckoned 475 years, which make 490 according to the Hebrew numeration, as they measure the years by the course of the moon; so that, as is easy to show, their year consists of 354 days, while the solar year has  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days. For the latter exceeds the period of twelve months, according to the moon's course, by  $11\frac{1}{4}$  days. Hence the Greeks and the Jews insert three intercalary months every 8 years. For 8 times  $11\frac{1}{4}$  days makes up 3 months. Therefore 475 years make 59 periods of 8 years each, and 3 months besides. But since thus there are 3 intercalary months every 8 years, we get thus 15 years *minus* a few days; and these being added to the 475 years, make up in all the 70 weeks.

## XVII.

*On the Fortunes of Hyrcanus and Antigonus, and on Herod, Augustus, Antony, and Cleopatra, in abstract.*

1. Octavius Sebastus, or, as the Romans call him, Augustus, the adopted son of Caius, on returning to Rome from Apollonias in Epirus, where he was educated, possessed himself of the first place in the government. And Antony afterwards obtained the rule of Asia and the districts beyond. In his time the Jews accused Herod; but he put the deputies to death, and restored Herod to his government. Afterwards, however, along with Hyrcanus and Phasaelus his brother, he was driven out, and betook himself in flight to Antony. And as the Jews would not receive him, an obstinate battle took place; and in a short time after, as he had conquered in battle, he also drove out Antigonus, who had returned. And Antigonus fled to Herod the Parthian king, and was restored by the help of his son Pacorus, which help was given on his promising to pay 1000 talents of gold. And Herod then in his turn had to flee, while Phasaelus was slain in battle, and Hyrcanus was surrendered alive to Antigonus. And after cutting off his ears, that he might be disqualified for the priesthood, he gave him to the Parthians to lead into captivity; for he scrupled to put him to death, as he was a relation of his own. And Herod, on his expulsion, betook himself first to Malichus king of the Arabians; and when he did not receive him, through fear of the Parthians, he went away to Alexandria to Cleopatra. That was the 185th Olympiad. Cleopatra having put to death her brother,



who was her consort in the government, and being then summoned by Antony to Cilicia to make her defence, committed the care of the sovereignty to Herod; and as he requested that he should not be entrusted with anything until he was restored to his own government, she took him with her and went to Antony. And as he was smitten with love for the princess, they despatched Herod to Rome to Octavius Augustus, who, on behalf of Antipater, Herod's father, and on behalf of Herod himself, and also because Antigonus was established as king by the help of the Parthians, gave a commission to the generals in Palestine and Syria to restore him to his government. And in concert with Sosius he waged war against Antigonus for a long time, and in manifold engagements. At that time also, Josephus, Herod's brother, died in his command. And Herod coming to Antony...

2. For three years they besieged Antigonus, and then brought him alive to Antony. And Antony himself also proclaimed Herod as king, and gave him, in addition, the cities Hippius, Gadara, Gaza, Joppa, Anthedon, and a part of Arabia, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, and Sacia, and Gaulanitis; and besides these, also the procuratorship of Syria. Herod was declared king of the Jews by the senate and Octavius Augustus, and reigned 34 years. Antony, when about to go on an expedition against the Parthians, slew Antigonus the king of the Jews, and gave Arabia to Cleopatra; and passing over into the territory of the Parthians, sustained a severe defeat, losing the greater part of his army. That was in the 186th Olympiad. Octavius Augustus led the forces of Italy and all the West against Antony, who refused to return to Rome through fear, on account of his failure in Parthia, and through his love for Cleopatra. And Antony met him with the forces of Asia. Herod, however, like a shrewd fellow, and one who waits upon the powerful, sent a double set of letters, and despatched his army to sea, charging his generals to watch the issue of events. And when the victory was decided, and when Antony, after sustaining two naval defeats, had fled to Egypt along with Cleopatra, they who bore the letters delivered to Augustus those which they had been keeping secretly for Antony. And on Herod falls...

3. Cleopatra shut herself up in a mausoleum, and made away with herself, employing the wild asp as the instrument of death. At that time Augustus captured Cleopatra's sons, Helios and Selene, on their flight to the Thebaid. Nicopolis was founded opposite Actium, and the games called Actia were instituted. On the capture of Alexandria, Cornelius Gallus was sent as first governor of Egypt, and he destroyed the cities of the Egyptians that refused obedience. Up to this time the Lagidae ruled; and the whole duration of the Macedonian empire after the subversion of the Persian power was 298 years. Thus is made up the whole period from the foundation of the Macedonian empire to its subversion in the time of the Ptolemies, and under Cleopatra, the last of these, the date of which event is the 11th year of the monarchy and empire of the Romans, and the 4th year of the 187th Olympiad. Altogether, from Adam 5472 years are reckoned.

4. After the taking of Alexandria the 188th Olympiad began. Herod founded anew the city of the Gabinii, the ancient Samaria, and called it Sebaste; and having erected its seaport, the tower of Strato, into a city, he named it Caesarea after the same, and raised in each a temple in honour of Octavius. And afterwards he founded Antipatris in the Lydian plain, so naming it after his father, and settled in it the people about Sebaste, whom he had dispossessed of their land. He founded also other cities; and to the Jews he was severe, but to other nations most urbane. It was now the 189th Olympiad, which (Olympiad) in the year that had the bissextile day, the 6th day before the Calends of March, — i.e., the 24th of February, — corresponded with the 24th year of the era of Antioch, whereby the year was determined in its proper limits.

## XVIII.

*On the Circumstances connected with our Saviour's Passion and His Life-giving Resurrection.*

1. As to His works severally, and His cures effected upon body and soul, and the mysteries of His doctrine, and the resurrection from the dead, these have been most authoritatively set forth by His disciples and apostles before us. On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down.

This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his *History*, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Saviour falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Let that opinion pass however; let it carry the majority with it; and let this portent of the world be deemed an eclipse of the sun, like others a portent only to the eye. Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth — manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period. But it was a darkness induced by God, because the Lord happened then to suffer. And calculation makes out that the period of 70 weeks, as noted in Daniel, is completed at this time.

2. From Artaxerxes, moreover, 70 weeks are reckoned up to the time of Christ, according to the numeration of the Jews. For from Nehemiah, who was sent by Artaxerxes to people Jerusalem, about the 120th year of the Persian empire, and in the 20th year of Artaxerxes himself, and the 4th year of the 83d Olympiad, up to this time, which was the 2d year of the 102d Olympiad, and the 16th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, there are given 475 years, which make 490 Hebrew years, since they measure the years by the lunar month of  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days, as may easily be explained, the annual period according to the sun consisting of  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, while the lunar period of 12 months has  $11\frac{1}{4}$  days less. For which reason the Greeks and the Jews insert three intercalary months every eight years. For 8 times  $11\frac{1}{4}$  days make 3 months. The 475 years, therefore, contain 59 periods of 8 years and three months over: thus, the three intercalary months for every 8 years being added, we get 15 years, and these together with the 475 years make 70 weeks. Let no one now think us unskilled in the calculations of astronomy, when we fix without further ado the number of days at  $365\frac{1}{4}$ . For it is not in ignorance of the truth, but rather by reason of exact study, that we have stated our opinion so shortly. But let what follows also be presented as in outline to those who endeavour to inquire minutely into all things.

3. Each year in the general consists of 365 days; and the space of a day and night being divided into nineteen parts, we have also five of these. And in saying that the year consists of  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, and there being the five nineteenth parts . . . to the 475 there are  $6\frac{1}{4}$  days. Furthermore, we find, according to exact computation, that the lunar month has  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days. . . And these come to a little time. Now it happens that from the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes (as it is given in Ezra among the Hebrews), which, according to the Greeks, was the 4th year of the 80th Olympiad, to the 16th year of Tiberius Caesar, which was the second year of the 102d Olympiad, there are in all the 475 years already noted, which in the Hebrew system make 490 years, as has been previously stated, that is, 70 weeks, by which period the time of Christ's advent was measured in the announcement made to Daniel by Gabriel. And if any one thinks that the 15 Hebrew years added to the others involve us in an error of 10, nothing at least which cannot be accounted for has been introduced. And the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  week which we suppose must be added to make the whole number, meets the question about the 15 years, and removes the difficulty about the time; and that the prophecies are usually put forth in a somewhat symbolic form, is quite evident.

4. As far, then, as is in our power, we have taken the Scripture, I think, correctly; especially seeing that the preceding section about the vision seems to state the whole matter shortly, its first words being, "In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar," where he prophesies of the subversion of the Persian power by the Greeks, which empires are symbolized in the prophecy under the figures of the ram and the goat respectively. "The sacrifice," he says, "shall be abolished, and the holy places shall be made desolate, so as to be trodden under foot; which things shall be determined within 2300 days." For if we take the day as a month, just as elsewhere in prophecy days are taken as years, and

in different places are used in different ways, reducing the period in the same way as has been done above to Hebrew months, we shall find the period fully made out to the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes, from the capture of Jerusalem. For there are given thus 185 years, and one year falls to be added to these — the year in which Nehemiah built the wall of the city. In 186 years, therefore, we find 2300 Hebrew months, as 8 years have in addition 3 intercalary months. From Artaxerxes, again, in whose time the command went forth that Jerusalem should be built, there are 70 weeks. These matters, however, we have discussed by themselves, and with greater exactness, in our book *On the Weeks and this Prophecy*. But I am amazed that the Jews deny that the Lord has yet come, and that the followers of Marcion refuse to admit that His coming was predicted in the prophecies when the Scriptures display the matter so openly to our view. *And after something else:...* The period, then, to the advent of the Lord from Adam and the creation is 5531 years, from which epoch to the 250th Olympiad there are 192 years, as has been shown above.

### XIX.

For we who both know the measure of those words, and are not ignorant of the grace of faith, give thanks to the Father, who has bestowed on us His creatures Jesus Christ the Saviour of all, and our Lord; to whom be glory and majesty, with the Holy Spirit, for ever.

Eds. Roberts, & Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 6, 130-38.

## III. THE PASSION OF ST. SYMPHOROSA AND HER SEVEN SONS (A.D. 120)

1. When Adrian had built a palace, and wished to dedicate it by that wicked ceremonial, and began to seek responses by sacrifices to idols, and to the demons that dwell in idols, they replied, and said: "The widow Symphorosa, with her seven sons, wounds us day by day in invoking her God. If she therefore, together with her sons, shall offer sacrifice, we promise to make good all that you ask." Then Adrian ordered her to be seized, along with her sons, and advised them in courteous terms to consent to offer sacrifice to the idols. To him, however, the blessed Symphorosa answered: "My husband Getulius, together with his brother Amantius, when they were tribunes in thy service, suffered different punishments for the name of Christ, rather than consent to sacrifice to idols, and, like good athletes, they overcame thy demons in death. For, rather than be prevailed on, they chose to be beheaded, and suffered death; which death, being endured for the name of Christ, gained them temporal ignominy indeed among men of this earth, but everlasting honour and glory among the angels; and moving now among them, and exhibiting trophies of their sufferings, they enjoy eternal life with the King eternal in the heavens."

2. The Emperor Adrian said to the holy Symphorosa: "Either sacrifice thou along with thy sons to the omnipotent gods, or else I shall cause thee to be sacrificed thyself, together with thy sons." The blessed Symphorosa answered: "And whence is this great good to me, that I should be deemed worthy along with my sons to be offered as an oblation to God?" The Emperor Adrian said: "I shall cause thee to be sacrificed to my gods." The blessed Symphorosa replied: "Thy gods cannot take me in sacrifice; but if I am burned for the name of Christ, my God, I shall rather consume those demons of thine." The Emperor Adrian said: "Choose thou one of these alternatives: either sacrifice to my gods, or perish by an evil death." The blessed Symphorosa replied: "Thou thinkest that my mind can be altered by some kind of terror; whereas I long to rest with my husband Getulius, whom thou didst put to death for Christ's name." Then the Emperor Adrian ordered her to be led away to the temple of Hercules, and there first to be beaten with blows on the cheek, and afterwards to be suspended by the hair. But when by no argument and by no terror could he divert her from her

good resolution, he ordered her to be thrown into the river with a large stone fastened to her neck. And her brother Eugenius, principal of the district of Tiber, picked up her body, and buried it in a suburb of the same city.

3. Then, on another day, the Emperor Adrian ordered all her seven sons to be brought before him in company; and when he had challenged them to sacrifice to idols, and perceived that they yielded by no means to his threats and terrors, he ordered seven stakes to be fixed around the temple of Hercules, and commanded them to be stretched on the blocks there. And he ordered Crescens, the first, to be transfixed in the throat; and Julian, the second, to be stabbed in the breast; and Nemesius, the third, to be struck through the heart; and Primitivus, the fourth, to be wounded in the navel; and Justin, the fifth, to be struck through in the back with a sword; and Stracteus, the sixth, to be wounded in the side; and Eugenius, the seventh, to be cleft in twain from the head downwards.

4. The next day again the Emperor Adrian came to the temple of Hercules, and ordered their bodies to be carried off together, and cast into a deep pit; and the pontiffs gave to that place the name, *To the Seven Biothanati*. After these things the persecution ceased for a year and a half, in which period the holy bodies of all the martyrs were honoured, and consigned with all care to tumuli erected for that purpose, and their names are written in the book of life. The natal day, moreover, of the holy martyrs of Christ, the blessed Symphorosa and her seven sons, Crescens, Julian, Nemesius, Primitivus, Justin, Stracteus, and Eugenius, is held on the 18th July. Their bodies rest on the Tiburtine road, at the eighth mile-stone from the city, under the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 6, 138-9.

#### IV. A LETTER TO ORIGEN FROM AFRICANUS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA.

1. GREETING, my lord and son, most worthy Origen, from Africanus. In your sacred discussion with Agnomon you referred to that prophecy of Daniel which is related of his youth. This at that time, as was meet, I accepted as genuine. Now, however, I cannot understand how it escaped you that this part of the book is spurious. For, in sooth, this section, although apart from this it is elegantly written, is plainly a more modern forgery. There are many proofs of this. When Susanna is condemned to die, the prophet is seized by the Spirit, and cries out that the sentence is unjust. Now, in the first place, it is always in some other way that Daniel prophesies—by visions, and dreams, and an angel appearing to him, never by prophetic inspiration. Then, after crying out in this extraordinary fashion, he detects them in a way no less incredible, which not even Philistion the play-writer would have resorted to. For, not satisfied with rebuking them through the Spirit, he placed them apart, and asked them severally where they saw her committing adultery. And when the one said, “Under a holm-tree” (*prinos*), he answered that the angel would saw him asunder (*prisein*); and in a similar fashion menaced the other who said: “Under a mastich-tree” (*schinos*), with being rent asunder (*schisthenai*). Now, in Greek, it happens that “holm-tree” and “saw asunder,” and “rend” and “mastich-tree” sound alike; but in Hebrew they are quite distinct. But all books of the Old Testament have been translated from Hebrew into Greek.

2. Moreover, how is it that they who were captives among the Chaldaeans, lost and won at play, thrown out unburied on the streets, as was prophesied of the former captivity, their sons torn from them to be eunuchs, and their daughters to be concubines, as had been prophesied; how is it that such could pass sentence of death, and that on the wife of their king Joakim, whom the king of the Babylonians had made partner of his throne? Then if it was not this Joakim, but some other from the common people, whence had a captive such a mansion and spacious garden? But a more fatal objection is, that this section, along with the other two at the end of it, is not contained in the Daniel received among the Jews. And add that, among all the many prophets who had been before, there is no one who has quoted from another word for word. For they had no need to go a-begging for words, since their own were true; but this one, in rebuking one of those men, quotes the words of the Lord: “The innocent and righteous shalt thou not slay.” From all this I infer that this section is a later addition. Moreover, the style is different. I have struck the blow; do you give the echo; answer, and instruct me. Salute all my masters. The learned all salute thee. With all my heart I pray for your and your circle’s health.

eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 4, 385.



# Preparing Urban Scholar Practitioners

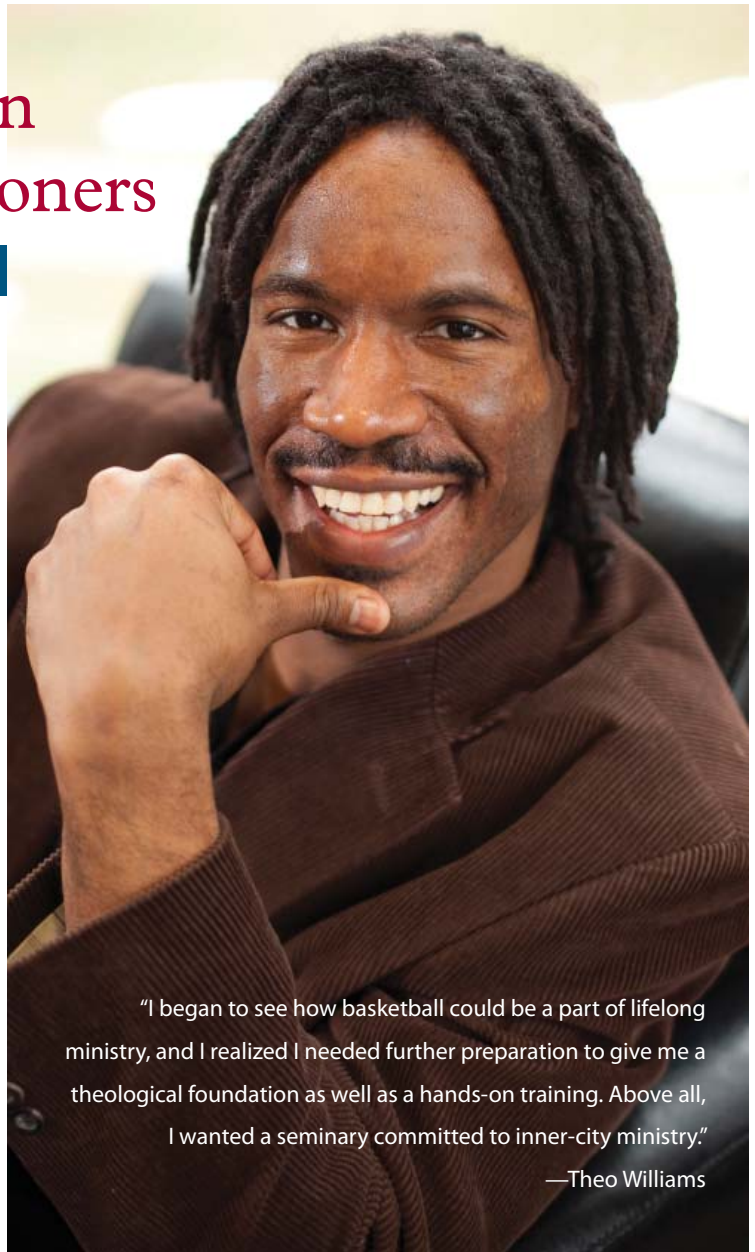
## THEO WILLIAMS

Theo Williams grew up playing basketball, dreaming he'd play professionally someday. But as Theo entered college, God used a series of injuries to change his priorities. He began to coach, using basketball to reach inner city youth for Jesus Christ.

Theo enrolled in the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME), the Boston campus of Gordon-Conwell. While at CUME, Theo co-founded and served as president of Antioch, Inc., a nonprofit committed to reconciliation, assisted in the planting of a church and honed his poetry skills. Upon graduating in 2004 with a Master of Arts in Urban Ministry, Theo and his wife Nicole spent a year in Jamaica mentoring youth through sports and music.

Theo currently works at Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana, as Associate Professor of Communication, as well as the Faculty Coordinator for the Center for Intercultural Development.

Whether teaching speech, conducting multicultural youth ministry, recording a spoken-word album, or starting a new church, Theo is integrating what he learned in the classroom and through his experiences at CUME.



"I began to see how basketball could be a part of lifelong ministry, and I realized I needed further preparation to give me a theological foundation as well as a hands-on training. Above all, I wanted a seminary committed to inner-city ministry."  
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# A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE UNDISPUTED EXTANT WORKS OF AFRICANUS

William David Spencer

Julius Africanus was born into a time of war and sporadic persecution of Christians. In his youth, the pugnacious emperor Lucius Septimius Severus, on what amounts to a drive-by persecution at Rome between campaigns, destroyed the valiant, twenty one year old Christian mother and cell group leader Vibia Perpetua and her coworkers.<sup>1</sup> Severus' son, nicknamed "Greatcoat" (*Caracalla*) for the army outfit he affected, spared Christians, concentrating instead on having his co-ruling brother murdered and then, as sole emperor, waging war abroad until he was assassinated by his own men. His successor, Macrinus, who engineered the assassination, lasted only a year, having tried to extend the army's time at Syria while cutting down its paychecks. In response, he was executed. It was a brutal time for brutal leadership. Next, Varius Avitus Elagabalus, rumored by his grandmother to be Caracalla's natural son, was declared emperor, only to have his aunt bribe the Praetorian guard to assassinate him and place his cousin on the throne. And then a respite occurred.

Alexander Severus, who lasted some thirteen years as emperor, a sort of recent record, given the six, one, and four years of his predecessors, was an entirely different type of personality. Some historians, like Henry Michael Denne Parker and Brian Herbert Warmington, devalue him with the terse dismissal, "throughout his reign he was under the influence of his mother," pointing out his attempt to negotiate for peace with the German agitators, rather than simply crushing them, led to the army's disenchantment with his leadership and subsequent abandonment and assassination of mother and son.<sup>2</sup> But, such pacifism, as a domestic policy as well, allowed Christians, living a century before the Church would be protected by law, a chance to flourish.

Despite her more lethal side, Julia Mamaea, Alexander's mother, seems to have been more open to religious dialogue than the predeceasing priest of the Invincible Sun, Elagabalus, or his "female senate" leading mother (who was preoccupied with etiquette), whom Julia replaced with her own son and rule.<sup>3</sup> She is noted to have discussed Christian teaching with Origen, and, following her lead, Alexander too "practiced a conscious tolerance" toward Christians, as Williston Walker notes. Under such opportunity, a thinker like Africanus would stand out and, given the possibility, soon flourish.<sup>4</sup>

Today, when I read his work, I am struck by how relevant to our times, and particularly to evangelicals, some of his key concerns seem to be. At the same time, he also treated interests germane to his own time. In short, this able scholar thought fully for his time so that his thoughts ultimately transcended them. As a result, everyone then and now is able to reap the benefits of his insights. That his conclusions are not universally applied in current Christianity and that so much of his work may have been lost, however, are very sad realities. Perhaps archaeology will someday yield more of his legacy to edify us. But in the meantime, let us take full advantage of the inheritance we do have: his *Letter to Aristides*, what is extant of *The Chronography*, his biography of Symphorosa and her seven

1 See "The Martyrdom of Perpetua: A Protest Account of Third-Century Christianity," translated by Rosemary Rader in Patricia Wilson-Kastner, et. al., *A Lost Tradition: Women Writers of the Early Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1981). A recent novel on Perpetua, from classicist Andrea Lorenzo Molinari, president of Blessed Edmund Rice School for Pastoral Ministry, was published in 2006 by Wipf and Stock (also see a review of this book by GCTS professor, Rev. Dr. Aída Besançon Spencer, an article by Dr. Molinari, "Women Martyrs in the Early Church: Hearing Another Side to the Story," and my own further thoughts on the interaction of Perpetua and Septimius Severus in my editorial, all in the journal I edit, *Priscilla Papers* 22.1 [Winter 2008]).

2 Henry Michael Denne Parker and Brian Herbert Warmington, "Severus (2) Alexander," in N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 982-83.

3 See Henry Michael Denne Parker and Brian Herbert Warmington, "Elagabalus," in Hammond and Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 377.

4 Williston Walker, et. al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1985), 96. Also see G.A. Williamson and Andrew Louth, eds., *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (New York: Penguin, 1989), 340.

sons, and his correspondence with Origen.

### *The Letter to Aristides*

I consider this letter to be one of the two greatest gifts Africanus has made to students of the Bible throughout history. What is its contribution? It deals with the differences between the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew's and Luke's gospels. In the modern era, a popular school of thought has contended that the tales of Jesus were stories spun out around the campfires of Israel and one record of origin made its way a hundred or so years later into the collection of legends put together by someone adopting the name of "Matthew," the disciple of Jesus (no doubt to give the tale legitimacy), and the other collected by someone adopting the name "Luke," after the physician attending Paul and the early church. Neither of these writers knew Jesus and both plundered the earlier set of reflections by someone calling himself "Mark," using the name of another early companion of Paul, whose work reflected the legend of the empty tomb, but did not yet incorporate the urban legends of a resurrection as this simple carpenter who preached love slowly transmogrified into a god.

But, honestly, the years have not been kind to this mythology. The unearthing of  $p^{52}$  (a portion of John), which is dated A.D. 90-120, possibly during the lifetime of the author, who lived, we are told, until the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117<sup>5</sup>), and the reassessment of  $p^4$  (sections of Luke) and  $p^{64/67}$  (a portion of Matthew chapters 26, 3, 5), whose dating is currently being revised to a range antedating A.D. 70 through the early 100s,<sup>6</sup> have not been matched with the discovery of any corresponding fragments of Mark's gospel that suggest a date of composition earlier than those of Matthew or Luke. Despite the great edifice of scholarship that has been built on the theory of the primacy of Mark, without such archaeological data, the order of the gospels the early church has commended to us still appears to me to be the chronological order in which these books were written, though I realize such reliance on historical rather than "internal" evidence has become an increasingly marginalized position within academia. What basically appears to me to be the basis of the objection to the traditional view is a dogged nineteenth century commitment to the developmental theory I sketched above. Since Mark ends with an empty tomb only and the other gospels record resurrection appearances, Mark is deemed earlier in the development of the Jesus saga, despite what archaeology can prove. That reaffirming the historic gospel order tradition should have become a radical suggestion today shows me how deeply into the evolutionary mythology of the development of religions we have all wandered and how far from the confession of initial revelation, on which our faith is built, we have strayed. As Bruce Metzger, my own faculty advisor in seminary, concluded in his landmark work on textual criticism about the unearthing of  $p^{52}$ : "Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the past century, that school of New Testament criticism which was inspired by the brilliant Tübingen professor Ferdinand Christian Baur could not have argued that the fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160."<sup>7</sup>

As a scholar, Africanus, too, was interested in the phenomena of two genealogies. In fact, his concern was both scholarly (he wanted to know) and apologetic (he, therefore, wanted to share). He announces as he commences his examination of the two genealogies: "Some indeed incorrectly allege that this discrepant enumeration and mixing of the names both of priestly men, as they think, and royal, was made properly in order that Christ might be shown rightfully to be both Priest and King" (Epistle I). For Africanus, for one to manipulate the genealogies in an attempt to establish Christ's messianic legitimacy is dishonest, but he puts his objection so winsomely, "Let us not therefore descend to such religious trifling as to establish the kingship and priesthood of Christ by the interchanges of the names" (I). As he perceives it, "The evangelists, therefore, would thus have spoken

5 See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II.33.2., and Eusebius, *History of the Church* III.23.

6 See, for example, an interesting discussion of the internal evidence for earlier datings in John Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), especially chapter 12: "When Were the Gospels Written?"

7 Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford, 2005), 56.

falsely, affirming what was not truth, but a fictitious commendation” (I).

Enter, then, the incisive mind of Africanus. He confronts, as we do, two genealogies, both claiming to be of Jesus. Perhaps he was told that one was the genealogy of Mary and the other the genealogy of Joseph, as I was (though A. Cleveland Coxe rejects that possibility on historical grounds, tracing crediting that theory to Anniius of Viterbo in A.D. 1502),<sup>8</sup> but the simplest reading rejects that solution. These texts clearly tell us that the genealogies are both of Jesus through Joseph.

So, what is a scholar to do? Primary source research. Africanus checks with the relatives of Jesus. I am not clear from his wording whether he was aware of their testimony and then worked out the chronology, or whether he did his computations first and then learned of the “tradition.” We know he was given to chronologies, because of *The Chronography* (which we will discuss next). But, at any rate, he checks with sources, draws from his own historical knowledge, and works out the details to establish that the genealogies are both of Joseph, one telling us of his natural descent, the other of his legal descent.

Africanus follows with an extended illustration from the example of Herod. Readers who pause to compare the Greek versions with the various English translations will notice a variety of punctuation options employed. These variations at first glance may appear to be trivial, but they are actually significant. The choice of punctuation seems to me to indicate whether the translators suppose Jesus’ relatives or Africanus himself supplied the illustration about Herod.

I might note I prefer punctuation with a period, as we see in G.A. Williamson’s translation of Eusebius’ *History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, 1.7 (where Africanus’ letter was preserved), rather than a colon after the second sentence, as in the translation from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, which we reproduced in this issue of the *Africanus Journal* and which seems to suggest that the Herod example is what the relatives of Jesus passed on. A period indicates the termination of the contribution of the relatives before Africanus himself works out the Herod example, so that the passage reads: “This is not dogmatic assertion or mere guesswork: the Saviour’s human relations, either in an ostentatious spirit or simply to give information, but in either case telling the truth, have handed down this tradition too. When Idumean bandits swooped on Ascalon ...,”<sup>9</sup> and then follows the Herod example. The “too” I read as referring back to the explanation about Jesus’ adopted ancestry. I hear Africanus saying: this is not simply dogma of the church or a guess on my part, Jesus’ relatives have passed this explanation on as well. Then he adds an example about Herod from his own further research.<sup>10</sup>

Punctuation, of course, is somewhat relative in the Greek. And, although to me the inner sense suggests that Jesus’ relatives discussed his genealogy alone, rather than Herod’s, still, one of the options Africanus gives for their willingness to share this information is that they were motivated either by *phanetiontes* (a participle related to the noun *phanetiasmos*, which Liddell and Scott tell us means “love of show and ostentation”<sup>11</sup>) or by *haplos* (with the thought of making a “guileless

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8 In “Elucidations,” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 139, A. Cleveland Coxe notes, “The opinion that Luke’s genealogy is that of Mary was unknown to antiquity. In the fifteenth century it was first propounded by Latin divines to do honour (as they supposed) to the Blessed Virgin. It was first broached by Anniius of Viterbo, A.D. 1502.”

9 Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, G.A. Williamson, Andrew Louth, trans. (London: Penguin, 1989), 1.7.

10 I notice Paul L. Maier also prefers the separating period, as does Kirsopp Lake in the Loeb edition, though I also notice E. Schwartz’s Greek text, which Lake uses, is punctuated with a colon. See the Greek text in Kirsopp Lake, trans., *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1926), 60, although Martin Joseph Routh’s Greek text in *Reliquiae Sacrae* (New York: Georg Olms, 1974), 235, I notice, is punctuated with a colon sign that can take the place of a colon or a semicolon.

11 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, comps., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1940), 1915.

response”<sup>12</sup>) to teach (*didasko*), so they may very well have been familiar with the Herod illustration.<sup>13</sup>

At any rate, also interesting to note is that Africanus appears to be uncertain whether or not to be put off by Jesus’ relatives. He entertains the idea that they may be bragging about their connection to the Savior and showing off. But he also holds out the possibility that they may be simple and innocent farmers trying to be helpful to visitors. If these are the same folks that Domitian leaned on for money only to hear them plead they were property poor, having all their income tied up in their farm (see Hegesippus’s report in Eusebius 3.19), they seem to have been honest farmers who realized they were privileged to descend from the earthly children of Joseph and Mary. While they certainly would be understandably proud, they could as well have been humbled by this fact and ready to evangelize anyone who inquired.

What would be the objection to their and Africanus’ explanation of the recording of two apparently conflicting genealogies for Jesus? The most obvious to me is that Jesus was not, technically, the son of Joseph. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin Mary and she gave him birth (Luke 1:35). Therefore, neither Matthew’s nor Luke’s genealogy is a clearly natural one. Since Mary was actually his earthly parent, it would make sense for the natural one to be hers. But, such an objection is not significant when evaluating the presentation of the genealogies by the gospel writers, since both qualify their lists. Matthew writes, “and Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, out of whom was begotten Jesus the one called Christ” (1:16, my trans.), so only Mary is clearly identified as the *theotokos*, the God-bearer. Luke writes, “being son, as was supposed, of Joseph” (3:23, my trans.). I notice the verb for “supposed” is an imperfect passive indicative 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of *nomizo*. Bauer’s lexicon notes the verb means “to follow...what is customary,” “to form an idea about someth[ing]. But with some suggestion of tentativeness or refraining from a definitive statement, think, believe.”<sup>14</sup> Barclay M. Newman, Jr. adds “suppose, assume”<sup>15</sup> “of Joseph, son of ‘Eli” (3:23b.). Since Africanus’ (and Jesus’ relatives’) argument establishes that the variation lies in the paternity of Joseph’s grandfather, then what we are actually examining is Joseph’s, not Jesus’, ancestry. Jesus, as the son of a heavenly Father, is adopted by Joseph. One cannot trace a lineage for God! Both genealogies imply that only a human descent from David’s line is the focus, and both record elsewhere that Jesus is actually the “Son of God” (e.g. Matt 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54, and the Father’s declaration in 3:17 and Luke 1:35; 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70, as well as other euphemistic statements like Luke 1:32, and, of course, the Father’s declaration in 9:35).

The overriding fact that Jesus is ultimately the Son of God and not naturally (but only legally) the son of Joseph also raises one of many problems I see with Simcha Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino’s recent book, *The Family Tomb of Jesus*. In it, these honest and sincere, however somewhat biblically naïve, investigative researchers attempt to prove a tomb discovered nearly 30 years ago with a cluster of biblical names is the authentic tomb of Jesus Christ. Key points of their proof are that one of the ossuaries (or bone boxes) is inscribed with the words, “Jesus, Son of Joseph,” and is laid beside others with the names of New Testament characters like “Joseph,” “Mary,” “Matthew.” But, in addition to the fact that half a dozen other bone boxes have been unearthed with the name “Jesus,” and even another one inscribed “Jesus, Son of Joseph,” which was found in 1926, the name “Jesus” (that is, “Joshua,” the name of the hero of the conquest) was an exceedingly common name in Israel, as was “Joseph” (the name of the most famous of the patriarchs). This the authors readily admit and even calculate the combination “Jesus, Son of Joseph” should appear over

12 Walter Bauer, Frederick William Danker, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich (BDAG), eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of*

*the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 104.

13 Of course, I could be completely wrong on this point. Maybe the descendants did have an entire explanation worked out for inquirers. On the other hand, Africanus, scholar that he was, was given to long and involved illustrations. Maybe a little bit of both is true: they had an explanation and he embellished its details.

14 BDAG, 675.

15 Barclay M. Newman, *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 121.

a thousand times, if all graves were marked in Israel in Jesus' time, one out of every 79 males being named Jesus (though I personally think their estimate is on the low end, since they are only supposing 80,000 males lived in Jerusalem during the entire century of ossuary use,<sup>16</sup> while Henri Daniel-Rops in his classic *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* notes, "It may then be supposed that by the time of Christ its population would have been a hundred and fifty thousand. This would be a maximum,"<sup>17</sup> which would place roughly 75,000 males in Jerusalem during Jesus' time alone, and many more to be counted across a century of ossuary use).

But, I raise an even more devastating objection to their enthusiastic conclusion, based on the wording that the gospel writers employ and Africanus highlights (i.e. "But Luke, on the other hand, says, 'Who was the son, as was supposed (for this, too, he adds) of Joseph, the son of Heli,'" [*The Epistle to Aristides*, III ]): namely, if this really were the Christian tomb of Jesus Christ, as investigators Jacobovici and Pellegrino speculate, the body would be identified as "Jesus, Son of God," not "Son of Joseph," which we are told clearly only nonbelievers and incipient disciples used early in Christ's ministry as a designation (e.g. John 6:42; 1:45). If Jesus were not regarded by his followers as the Son of God, as the gospel writers contend, then why would this working class criminal carpenter executed by the state, and subsequently his family and followers, months later be afforded ossuaries, which only the well-to-do could afford? One cannot have it both ways. If he was given special treatment as the Son of God, then his inscription in a Christian tomb should read accordingly. I raise this issue to show yet another example of how the aspects that the insightful and incisive Africanus highlights are ones from which principles can be extrapolated and applied both to old problems (the meaning of the genealogies) as well as new ones (as the true identity of the residents of the "family tomb").

In brief, I find the research and discussion of Africanus on the genealogies of Jesus impressive and convincing. The alternatives, two conflicting campfire tales and the lineage lines of his two parents, are neither well researched, nor are they particularly compelling. That so few today know of Africanus' explanation of the two genealogies seems to me less due to the quality of Africanus' argument and more to our neglect to transfer knowledge to our day that is a bit more complex than a simple soundbite answer. Clearly, we need to mine the treasures of past Christian thought with the same dedication that we invest in contemporary technological research if we are truly to benefit from our full scholarly inheritance.

#### *The Chronography*

On the opposite pole from the *Letter to Aristides* is what appears initially as the most locked into antiquity and perhaps useless instance of Africanus' work to the contemporary bottom-line mind: his "dictionary of dates." Despite being handed down to us with an Archbishop Ussher-type dating for the world, "5500 years as the period up to the advent of the Word of salvation" (*Chron.* I), even this compendium is not without contemporary application. Embedded in it, I believe, is Africanus' second great contribution: his assessment of the darkness at Jesus' death (XVIII:1). In his response, no more clearly can the timelessness of the Christian worldview be demonstrated, or the universality of its framework be evidenced.

After describing the events chronicled in Matthew 27:45, 51 (the darkness, the earthquakes), Africanus notes:

This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his *History*, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day according to the moon, and the passion of our Saviour falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon

<sup>16</sup> See pages 74-75 in Simcha Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino, *The Jesus Family Tomb* (New York: HarperSan-Francisco, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Henri Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* (Ann Arbor: MI: Servant, 1962), 87-88. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, F.H. and C.H. Cave, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 27 takes a low end population speculation of 25,000, which would mean roughly 12,000 males and would fit their 80,000 males over a century figure better.



and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? (*Chron.* XVIII.1)

Africanus proceeds to differentiate between an eclipse of the sun, as the one Phlegon records during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, and a preternatural event where the ground splits ("But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead...?" he asks [*Chron.* XVIII.1]).

What I find so interesting is that Africanus and the chronicler Thallus, who may have been either the Samaritan who was secretary to Augustus Caesar or one of Tiberius' freedmen,<sup>18</sup> both agree that a physical phenomenon, darkness, occurred at the death of Jesus. The debate between them concerns whether its cause was natural (due to a coincidental eclipse) or supra natural (a special act of God).

Today, of course, it is popular to dismiss the darkness as merely a literary device, an instance of the pathetic fallacy, where even nature mourns the death of a god. But, why would we question the reality of the darkness as an actual physical occurrence when the ancients on both sides agree a darkness happened and merely debate its origin? They stand so much closer than we do to the actual date of the events. As I noted, I believe our a-historicalness is due to the fact that much of academia today is still in thrall to the nineteenth and twentieth century doubt of those like the brilliant and persuasive Rudolf Bultmann, who assured us in his classic essay, "The New Testament and Mythology: The Problem of Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation": "We cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament."<sup>19</sup> To such scholars, the early church and its immediate descendants lived in a time of legend and magic when the phenomenal world (the world as it appears) pulsed with a romantic significance greater than the mere recitation of facts in our rigorously scientific age. This some affirm despite the fact that Saint Augustine, for example, argued that God in heaven must mean God dwelling among the saints, since God cannot be said to be more in one place than another. He conjectured "heaven" can certainly not mean that God resided in the sky, because then the birds would be closer to God's presence than humans would be and would count for more since their lives would be lived out nearer to God! (See his *Sermon on the Mount* 5:17.) Tertullian agreed, concluding, Christians are "heaven" and "earth." (See his *On Prayer*, 4). If you are reading my reflections after having perused the arguments of Africanus, you are probably wondering, as I was when I first encountered Africanus' treatment of the genealogies and the darkness, why am I not seeing in Africanus' thinking the routine simplicity and gullibility that some scholars suppose I should find there? Why, instead, am I finding myself confronting a very careful, painstaking dissection of the problems? Perhaps, we have been subjected to a kind of "age-ism," predicated upon unbelief and the lack of a vibrant continuing encounter with the risen Christ in many contemporary lives.

But, the phenomenon of darkness at Jesus' death was a well known fact in history. Its origin was what was under debate. We should take note. The arguments of Africanus, multiplying his objections to the merely physical explanation until it cannot reasonably stand, should give every seeker after truth pause for reflection. If he is as right as he appears to be, then intervention by the Divine has to be reintroduced into the logic of the explanation of this singular series of events.

Let me highlight one other aspect of the *Chronography* before I leave this compendium and move on.

18 See Alexander Hugh McDonald, "Thallus," in N.G. L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1050.

19 Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, Schubert M. Ogden, trans. & ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 4. For my discussion of their views and of what Jesus meant by "God in heaven," please see my chapter, "The Lord's Prayers," in our book, William David Spencer and Aida Besançon Spencer, *The Prayer Life of Jesus: Shout of Agony, Revelation of Love, a Commentary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 9-38, especially page 16.



When I was teaching with another seminary, I encountered a student who was utterly convinced that Genesis 6:1-2, which speaks of the “sons of Elohim” having intercourse with “the daughters of humanity” (*adam* – the word is in the singular not in the plural, as it is usually translated into English) was about angels marrying human women. He had been taught that interpretation in his home church. And that church was not without scholarly support. Gerhard Von Rad also championed this interpretation in his commentary on Genesis in the section appropriately entitled “The Angel Marriages.”<sup>20</sup> *The Oxford Study Bible*, edited by M. Jack Suggs, Catharine Doob Sakenfeld, and James R. Mueller, agrees that “Sons of the gods” is “a term of Canaanite origin for members of the pantheon (‘assembly of the gods’),” explaining, “In ancient belief, sexual contact between gods and human beings transmitted the qualities of the former. Here, however, humanity has overstepped the bounds that God assigned to creatures, so that divine correction is needed.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, nineteenth century evangelical interpreters like Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown rejected this view, contending, “By the former is meant the family of Seth, who were professedly religious; by the latter, the descendants of apostate Cain,” dismissing “giants” with “the term in *Hebrew* implies not so much the idea of great stature as of reckless ferocity.”<sup>22</sup> No doubt they took this position since Jesus himself explained that the dead, like angels who belong to eternity, neither marry nor are given in marriage (Luke 20: 34-40), which is why I, and I assume all other Christian ministers, have the couples we marry declare they are married “till death do us part.” In fact, the position that angelic beings have sex seems more a Mormon one these days than a Christian one, despite the persistence we see to put it forward in some branches of the Christian church. I notice that various evangelical study Bibles currently in print acknowledge both positions. The venerable New Pilgrim Bible notes, “The phrase ‘sons of God’ in the Bible always stands for beings directly created by God, as...angels,” while reminding us, “on the other hand, many scholars do not believe that angels are meant by the phrase ‘sons of God.’ Matthew 22:30 tells us that angels do not marry. These scholars believe that this verse is telling us that the descendants of Seth, who had been worshipers of God and believers in Him, began to take wives from the descendants of Cain.”<sup>23</sup> One finds the same range of opinion presented in the NIV/TNIV Study Bible notes, which explain in detail why “the phrase ‘sons of God’ here has been interpreted to refer either to angels or to human beings.”<sup>24</sup> One has to review this range of interpretation to see how relevant Africanus remains as a thinker. He declares in *The Chronography* that the “sons of God” are “the descendents of Seth” and “the descendents of Cain are named the seed of men, as having nothing divine in them, on account of the wickedness of their race.” Could these “sons of God” be angels? Africanus muses, “But if it is thought that these refer to angels, we must take them to be those who deal with magic and jugglery, who taught the women the motions of the stars and the knowledge of things celestial, by whose power they conceived the giants” (*Chron.* II). So, while he comments on the range of interpretations, he clearly prefers the human explanation, much like a contemporary evangelical interpreter would. At the same time, as I muse on his comments, to me his wording appears somewhat ambiguous and could be referring either to angelic creatures or to soothsayers or sorcerers, calling themselves divine beings, since Africanus concludes, as a result, “God decreed that the whole race of the living should perish in their impiety by the deluge” (II). Humans died in the deluge, not angels. But whatever Africanus meant to include in his own discussion, whether simply humans or possibly soothsaying angels, his preference is still stated clearly: “In my opinion ... the descendants of Seth are called the sons of God” (*Chron.* II). He prefers the human to human reading. I agree with him wholeheartedly.

Other helpful insights in his discussion of Scripture in *The Chronography* can be found in

20 Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 109.

21 M. Jack Suggs, Catharine Doob Sakenfeld, James R. Mueller, *The Oxford Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 16.

22 Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, David Brown, *Commentary Practical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961), 22.

23 E. Schuyler English, Doris W. Rikkers, eds., *The New Pilgrim Bible* (New York: Oxford, 2002), 14.

24 Kenneth L. Barker, *Zondervan TNIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 14-15.

fragment IX in his report of his own exploration of the Dead Sea, his dexterous attempt to reconcile Hebrew, Greek, and Persian history, given his understanding of the dates involved in fragment XIIIff, and his anticipation of the Millerite pre-millennial calculations of the rule of Artaxerxes, Daniel's seventy weeks, and the advent of Christ in fragment XVI. His scholarship and piety are evident throughout this fascinating record. So, while his thought communicated to his own day, it also continues to communicate to ours, because, in his writing, we encounter a critical mind, alive to ideas, interested in unearthing the facts, and assiduous in assessing them in his quest for the truth, which is a task that is always relevant.

### *Biographical Writings True and False*

Biographies of holy people were as popular in Africanus' day as they remain in ours among Christian believers. As the recent film "End of the Spear" reminds us, edifying stories of great martyrs who struggled for the faith continue to inspire believers. This is why *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* remains a classic, endorsed by everyone from seminary professors to popular Christian music bands. And, in the early church, the records of great champions of Christ who held fast to their confession of faith in the face of public disgrace, torture, and death were widely disseminated. The diary of Perpetua, for example, was smuggled out of prison and given an introduction perhaps by the famous lawyer Tertullian. Athanasius, architect of the Nicæan Creed, the central summary of Eastern and Western Christianity, took time and care to write *The Life of St. Anthony*. Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, Hegesippus, and a host of others gathered up stories of the apostles and other early martyrs, so we know how Peter, as he faced his own crucifixion, encouraged his wife as she was led to martyrdom (see Eusebius 3.30), or the aged and courageous Polycarp, disciple of John, set off with "zeal" or "haste" (*spoudas*<sup>25</sup>) toward his own death in the stadium of Smyrna (see Eusebius 4:15). Such biographies inspire the faithful to stretch beyond our own comfort zone and emulate the model of heroic believers who have gone before us and set the pace.

*The Passion of St. Symphorosa and her Seven Sons* fits within this genre of edifying records of martyrs to emulate. The account is a fascinating one. Symphorosa is no easily dismissed commoner Christian, like the two female maidservants who were ministers or deaconesses (*ministrae*) arrested and tortured by Pliny the Younger, the governor at Bithynia.<sup>26</sup> No, she is the wife and sister-in-law of tribunes who had had service with the Roman Emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus (A.D. 117-38). Hadrian, before his ascension to emperor, had been a member of the pagan "priestly colleges."<sup>27</sup> The Sibylline Oracles particularly emphasize his pagan piety, proclaiming, "He will also dedicate temples in all cities...He will also master all the mysteries of the magic shrines" (12:166, 169).<sup>28</sup> In Africanus' account of Symphorosa, we learn Hadrian had had her husband and his brother beheaded and was now picking on the widow and her children. Her bold answers are reminiscent of the certitude of Polycarp and Perpetua. She answers his threats directly with proofs she is a Christian, with praise of her God, and with utter disregard for his false deities. Africanus highlights her most heart-rending and poignant reply to the emperor's threats to have her sacrificed: "Thou thinkest that my mind can be altered by some kind of terror; whereas I long to rest with my husband Getulius, whom thou didst put to death for Christ's name" (*Passion* 2). That definitive statement ends the debate and Hadrian turns her over to torture and finally to death. A subsequent day he has her seven sons executed by a stabbing ritual in different parts of their bodies. As with the most famous of the martyrs, for example, James the Just, the persecution ceases with their death, enabling brave believers to retrieve and honor their bodies. No resurrection appearances, no miracles at the grave sites. The account is spare and potent. Africanus does not sensationalize this record. He records the courage of the martyrs and the

25 See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1630.

26 Pliny, *Epp.* X (ad Traj.), xcvi in Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford, 1963), 3.

27 Carol Humphrey Vivian Sutherland and Mason Hammond, "Hadrian," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 484.

28 J.J. Collins, ed., trans., "Sibylline Oracles (Second Century B.C. – Seventh Century A.D.)" in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 449.

location of their resting place “at the eighth mile-stone from the city” “on the Tiburtine road” (*Passion* 4), so others may honor them too.

This is a humbling story to read, when we see the level of faith that a witness like this magnificent woman and her courageous sons could bring to their trials. Every type of persuasion that would quell a woman and mother is presented from her disfigurement to the slaughter of her children. She remains articulate and steadfast.

That Africanus selected her among all the heroic martyrs from which he had to choose brings us to a deeper level of understanding. This is, in fact, a woman we are talking about. Africanus bypasses all the worthy male martyrs to extol a female and present her as a model for all to follow. For an egalitarian evangelical like myself, to read this account is to see a raised consciousness in an era church history has dubbed the “patristic period.” For Africanus, his was also obviously a “matristic period” as well. He saw the brave of both genders in the confessing church as being empowered to stand as models for the rest of us. If we are looking for the significance of Africanus to our contemporary age, in this case it may very well be this: that he represents a greater recognition of how God empowers the entire church to service than many of us do.

At the same time, he is neither gullible nor slipshod in his scrutiny even of such texts. His penchant for scholarship and accuracy that points him toward honoring Symphorosa and preserving her account also drives his skepticism as well in assessing the apocryphal tale of Susanna. Essentially, despite all the adulation accorded this story in the early church, Africanus tells Origen he has come to doubt the authenticity of the account.

In one of the most telling tributes to Africanus’s perspicacity, the renowned Origen, facing an onslaught of complaints from Africanus about the historicity of Susanna’s story, himself complains:

Your letter, from which I learn what you think of the Susanna in the Book of Daniel, which is used in the Churches, although apparently somewhat short, presents in its few words many problems, each of which demands no common treatment, but such as oversteps the character of a letter; and reaches the limits of a discourse (*Letter from Origen* 1)

Discounting the usual semblance of humility of the responder in such matters, we note that in Origen’s dissembling, “when I consider, as best I can, the measure of my intellect, that I may know myself, am aware that I am wanting in the accuracy necessary to reply to your letter,” and his plea for Africanus’ “indulgence” in “supplying anything I may omit,” we can still discover both the high regard in which this noted teacher of the church holds Africanus and his cordiality toward his “beloved brother in God the Father, through Jesus Christ.” It is an interesting way to do debate, revealing, as it does, a deeper level of shared inquiry than we have achieved in many of our current interactions even across friendly theological camps. I do not remember in my experience a debate between Arminians and Calvinists, Open Theists and their opponents, Egalitarians and Hierarchists, Inerrantists and Limited Inerrantists, et. al. where one defender turned to a critic and said, “You wouldn’t mind supplying me with any arguments for my side I happen to omit, would you?” And then expecting to receive cordial compliance!

Africanus, too, holds a high opinion of Origen, who, as a matter of fact, had been in charge of the catechetical school in Alexandria in which (somewhere in the period between A.D. 228-232) Africanus studied under Heraclas, to whom Origen had transferred the basic instruction. Africanus addresses his letter in a very interesting manner. He calls Origen “my lord (*kurios*) and my son (*buios*).”<sup>29</sup> If, as appears to be the scholarly consensus, Africanus was born around A.D. 200 and Origen around A.D. 185-186, then Origen was both Africanus’ elder in years and in the faith. So, Africanus addressing his elder as “Lord” or “Master” seems appropriate. But, what do we make of the term “my son”? One cogent explanation sheds possible light on an area in which scholars have disagreed, whether Africanus indeed became a bishop (specifically the bishop of Emmaus) or not. G.

A. Williamson and Andrew Louth, for example, identify Africanus as “a lay Christian writer.”<sup>30</sup> A. Cleveland Coxe, on the other hand, supposes, “And, if he became ‘bishop of Emmaus,’ it could hardly have been before the year 240, when he was of ripe age and experience.”<sup>31</sup> Beside the fact that such a late dating seems based on a dubious assumption, given the evidence that young bishops were indeed ordained in the early church (e.g. Ignatius’ letter “To the Magnesians”: “But it is not right for you to take advantage of your bishop because of his age [*elikia*]. You should render him all due respect according to the power of God the Father, just as I have learned that even your holy presbyters have not exploited his seemingly youthful appearance [*phainō neoterikos*] [or: rank; or position (*taxis*)]”<sup>32</sup>), the fact that Africanus was ordained a bishop would explain him addressing his elder as “son.”<sup>33</sup>

After calling Origen “most worthy” and his previous discussion on the topic “sacred,” Africanus begins irenically by complimenting *The History of Susanna*, praising the elegance of the text. During my own doctoral studies, since I was working with *Susanna* and *Bel and the Dragon*, as I put together the dissertation that would eventually become my book, *Mysterium and Mystery: The Clerical Crime Novel*, I decided to memorize both texts in Greek, as I was to be tested on their translation. As I did so, I came to agree with Africanus. *Susanna* is an elegantly worded book and far superior to *Bel and the Dragon*.<sup>34</sup>

Having set a respectful tone, Africanus now proceeds to list his objections. These seem balanced and sensible. His first is a *modus operandi* argument. He points out the mode of prophecy is not commensurate with Daniel’s experience of revelation. Origen will respond by pointing to the freedom of God to vary the means of communication, citing Hebrews 1:1, and providing a list of examples.<sup>35</sup> Africanus’s next objection, after taking a side swipe at the artificial and theatrical means of detection employed (which strikes him like the stumbling plot of a bad drama), proceeds to make an impressive point by basing itself on the nature of the work’s Greek vocabulary and its distance from any possible Hebrew antecedents. If the book were not spurious and had indeed its origin within the canonical *Daniel*, he argues, such Hebrew antecedents would be more evident. Origen’s lengthy answer appears initially either to prevaricate or miss Africanus’ point entirely, as it heaps up piles of basically irrelevant data. Specifically, Origen enumerates many examples of disparity between the Septuagint (LXX) texts of various canonical books and the Hebrew originals in an attempt to present such as evidence that *Susanna* and *Bel and the Dragon* may be similar missing parts. But, Africanus’ point was that much of the delight in the story turns on the wordplays in Daniel’s cross examination as he mocks the witnesses. These puns, as Africanus explains, depend on a Greek, not a Hebrew, original. None of the data Origen troops out addresses this devastating objection. When Origen finally does address the problem of the puns, his answer is no answer at all. He tells Africanus he consulted some Jews who told him they did not know the Hebrew words for the trees in the tale, whose names in Greek supply the double entendres, but were accustomed to using Syriac names, so Origen concludes, “I am cautious of affirming whether or not there is any correspondence to this play of words in the Hebrew. Your reason for affirming that there is not, you yourself probably know.”<sup>36</sup>

30 See G.A. Williamson and Andrew Louth, “Africanus,” in Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, 340.

31 A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Julius Africanus,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 6, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., 123.

32 See the Greek with translation by Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Loeb Classical Library 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 242-45.

33 The insight was suggested to me by my wife, Rev. Dr. Aída Besançon Spencer.

34 Interested readers can see my own analysis of these two seminal detective stories, which is what *Susanna* and *Bel and the Dragon* are, in my book, *Mysterium and Mystery: The Clerical Crime Novel* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 17-30.

35 See “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 4, 386-92. This is section 10 of the letter.

36 “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” 6.

In other words, Origen is saying, my experts could not help, so no data is available. This is hardly an end-of-story argument.

Africanus presses on with an inquiry concerning how captive Israel could pass a death sentence on either puppet king or wealthy commoner (with a further question about how an enslaved commoner could become wealthy in captivity in the first place). Origen answers in an odd manner. He addresses the second question first, how a common slave could be wealthy, by citing *Tobias*, which he admits is a book even “the Jews do not use,” since it is “not even found in the Hebrew Apocrypha,” though “the Churches use *Tobias*.”<sup>37</sup> The second he answers, “It is no uncommon thing, when great nations become subject, that the king should allow the captives to use their own laws and courts of justice.”<sup>38</sup> Since the most famous example available to them, the trial of Jesus, records those accusing Jesus as complaining they had no right to execute anyone under Roman law (John 18:31),<sup>39</sup> Africanus’s argument is persuasive, though not conclusive, since neither scholar summons specific proof from Babylonian governmental policies or practices during its captivity of Israel or a similar nation. Finally, Africanus complains that the additions to Daniel, *Susanna*, *Bel and the Dragon*, and *The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three* quote other Scripture too accurately. Origen objects and gives his examples, but, as we all know, the conclusion in our day among evangelicals is to agree with Africanus and reject Origen’s defense. Africanus’ reasoning resonates more with the contemporary protestant mind: doubt and question, do not rely on tradition as its own authority. When one assesses Origen’s defense, it seems rather weak and replete with specious techniques (e.g. arguments from silence [the Jews “hid from the knowledge of the people as many of the passages which contained any scandal against the elders, rulers, and judges as they could” and “the translators of the History of Susanna contrived it so that they found out some Greek words, derived from the same root, which either corresponded exactly to the Hebrew form {though this I hardly think possible}, or presented some analogy to it.”<sup>40</sup>], special pleading [the book “circulate[s] in the Churches” and “found in every Church of Christ in that Greek copy”<sup>41</sup>], and misapplications of data [specific references to the fate of OT personages in the Gospels and *Hebrews* that cannot be located in the OT are used as a defense that this missing book about Susanna must also have been “concealed and removed from the Scriptures by men themselves not very far removed from the counsel of these elders”<sup>42</sup>]). In summary, Origen’s, though an erudite apology, is finally unconvincing to overturn what has become a universal decision in later evangelical, protestant Christianity: the rejection of the canonizing of the apocryphal books. Essentially, I find Africanus’ is the mind more conversant in this debate with my own, not Origen’s. And this conclusion best explains why I find so much enduring and helpful in the work of Africanus. I see he does not appeal to me simply because his mind resonates with those of my own age. No, the truth lies deeper than that. He resonates with me and with those of many ages besides my own because his mind is timeless when dealing with such truths as the genealogies’ or the darkness’ validity. His work is applicable to any era wherein believers take their faith and the testimony of the Bible’s records seriously. In a society where Christian scholars’ contributions are not summarily destroyed, as in the one afforded him by a more tolerant, gentle, and enlightened, though beleaguered, leader like Alexander Severus, a thinker like Africanus will thrive – and, as a result, generations of readers who are providentially blessed to discover his work will be enriched.

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37 “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” 13.

38 “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” 14

39 Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s *Archaeological Study Bible*, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Duane A. Garrett, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 1756, notes: The Sanhedrin “had been deprived by the Roman government of the right to carry out capital punishment, except in the case of a foreigner who entered the sacred precincts of the temple...Sometimes the Romans seem to have tolerated local executions (e.g. Stephen, Ac 7), but normally they retrained the sole right to inflict the death penalty.”

40 “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” 9, 12.

41 “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” 2.

42 “A Letter from Origen to Africanus,” 9.



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## “PARALLELOMANIA” AND GOD’S UNIQUE REVELATION\*

Aída Besançon Spencer

Julius Africanus in the third century voiced a concern to Aristides. Christian interpreters should not conclude that the evangelists would affirm “what was not truth,” as a way to understand differences in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke. Then in effect “a lie” would be “contrived for the praise and glory of Christ.” That would make the Christian writers “false witnesses” (I Cor. 15:15). And, if the writers of the New Testament would be afraid lest they “should seem a false witness in narrating a marvellous fact, how should not he be justly afraid, who tries to establish the truth by a false statement, preparing an untrue opinion?” (Epistle to Aristides I). Africanus’ helpful principle is still relevant today. Those of us who care for God’s written revelation need to be careful that our methods of interpretation do not undermine the truth of God’s revelation. In other words, our means affect our ends.

In Biblical Studies for many years we have recognized the misuse of the principle of correlation, which is that people’s historical life is so related and interdependent, no radical change can take place without affecting a change in all that immediately surrounds it. In this sense, sociological change has been completely identified with chemical reaction. The history of religion school in the early 1900s is well known among evangelicals as a school which misused the principle of correlation by trying to explain Christianity solely on the basis of its environment. In 1961, Society of Biblical Literature president Samuel Sandmel, professor at Hebrew Union College, warned scholars of the danger of “parallelomania,” “that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction.”<sup>1</sup> Sandmel was concerned to have accurate scholarship. The principle of correlation might encourage a scholar 1) to find parallels between passages that are not really parallel, 2) to assume a direct organic literary connection provided the parallels, and 3) to draw the conclusion that the flow is in a particular direction.<sup>2</sup> He argued that “detailed study is the criterion” for the difference between an abstract versus a specific parallel.<sup>3</sup> “Detailed study ought to respect the context and not be limited to juxtaposing mere excerpts. Two passages may sound the same in splendid isolation from their context, but when seen in context reflect difference rather than similarity.”<sup>4</sup> In addition, “it is the distinctive which is significant for identifying the particular, and not the broad areas in common with other Judaism.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, Scripture as a common source will cause commonalities among ancient Jewish writers. These parallels are of no consequence. Chronology is also important.<sup>6</sup> Sandmel adds that we certainly do not want to distort Paul by conforming Paul’s context to the content of the alleged parallel. In other words, alleged extrabiblical parallels can distort the meaning of Paul’s own writings. Even though a Jewish scholar, Sandmel decided: “I am prepared to believe that Paul represents more than a hodgepodge of sources. I find in his epistles a consistency and a cohesiveness of thought that make me suppose that he had some genuine individuality....I am not prepared to believe that there was a bridge for one-way traffic that stretched directly from the caves on the west bank of the Dead Sea to Galilee, or even further into Tarsus, Ephesus, Galatia, and Mars Hill.”<sup>7</sup> Possibility and probability are not predetermined inference.<sup>8</sup> He concludes that parallels can be “exact,” “some with and some devoid of significance,” or imperfect, or parallels only out of context.<sup>9</sup> Sandmel’s concern is sound, accurate, objective scholarship. He concludes in 1961 “that we are at a junction when biblical scholarship should recognize parallelomania for the disease that it is.”<sup>10</sup>

J. Gresham Machen in 1925 also had similar concerns. He too was concerned for sound, accurate, objective scholarship because misuse of the principle of correlation affects the question of the origin of Christianity, which is “the question of the truth of Christianity.”<sup>11</sup> The New Testament is “fundamental and authoritative in all ages of the Church.”<sup>12</sup> Its truths are unique and demand an

“absolutely exclusive devotion.”<sup>13</sup> In his assessment of the comparative religion school, he concludes that “a parallel does not always mean a relationship of dependence.”<sup>14</sup> Similarity between pagan religions and Christianity is often “enormously exaggerated.”<sup>15</sup> The dates of the so-called sources are not always highlighted.<sup>16</sup> The comparative-religion school does “not like having the flow of their thought checked by so homely a thing as a date.”<sup>17</sup> The history of religion school has the “same lordly disregard of dates” running all through its modern treatment of the New Testament period.<sup>18</sup> In addition, it rarely convincingly shows through what channels pagan influences entered Christianity.<sup>19</sup>

Machen does exemplify much knowledge of the first century Jewish and Greco-Roman perspectives. Jewish Christians such as Paul needed to be familiar, too, with Gentile habits of thought and life in order to win them to follow Christ<sup>20</sup> (I Cor 9:22). For one, such knowledge demonstrates the need and longing of the ancient world for redemption, the preparation for the coming of the gospel, and Christianity as the unique way to satisfy such need.<sup>21</sup> Second, Paul may have used vocabulary or terms in the “Greek world-language of the Hellenistic age” that were present also in mystery religions, but not ideas.<sup>22</sup> However, in addition to sound scholarship, Machen shows that syncretistic borrowing is alien to the exclusive claims of Christianity (and Judaism).<sup>23</sup> I Corinthians 1:23 provides crucial proof. How could Christianity be “foolish” to Gentiles if it borrowed all from pagan religions?<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, syncretistic borrowing is alien to the all-sufficiency of the Christian message. Paul’s religion was based on what Jesus had done and had said during his earthly life.<sup>25</sup> The Christian “message had been revealed” to Paul “directly by the Lord. It was supported by the testimony of those who had been intimate with Jesus; it was supported by the Old Testament Scriptures. But throughout it was the product of revelation.”<sup>26</sup> How can one suppose that the man who wrote “hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor 1:20), would be “willing to modify the divine foolishness of his message in order to make it conform to the religion of pagan hearers?”<sup>27</sup>

We can buttress Machen’s points about the Bible as revelation by referring to some specific Scriptures that claim that they are the product of revelation. In addition to 1 Corinthians 1, another important principle for Paul is presented in I Thessalonians 2:13, where he states that the message that he and Silvanus and Timothy are sharing is truly a word “from God, not a human word” which is “at work” among the ones believing. Repeatedly the Bible claims to be accurate because it is indeed revealed by God.<sup>28</sup> For example,

a) “The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isa 40:18). People are as inconstant as the grass or flower, but not God’s word.

b) The Lord tells Jeremiah: “I have put my words in your mouth” (Jer 1:9). As a true prophet, Jeremiah “has stood in the council of the Lord so as to see and to hear his word” (Jer 1:18). The Lord is against the prophets “who use their own tongues and say, ‘Says the Lord’” (Jer 23:30).

c) The Lord also tells Ezekiel: “speak my very words” to Israel (Ezek 3:4). The prophet Ezekiel contrasts with those prophets who prophesy “out of their own imagination,” who say, “‘Says the Lord,’ when the Lord has not sent them” and the Lord “did not speak” (Ezek 13:1, 6, 7).

d) Micaiah as a true prophet speaks God’s words not merely those of his fellow prophets (2 Chron 18:13).

e) And, of course, Jesus says: “God is true. For whom God has sent—speaks God’s words” (*brema*, John 3:33b-34; see also Rev 21:5; 22:6; John 10:35).

A naturalistic explanation of the genesis of Paul’s religion will always have difficulties; as Machen concludes his book *The Origin of Paul’s Religion*: “The fundamental difficulty in explaining the origin of Paulinism will never disappear by being ignored; it will never yield to compromises of any kind. It will disappear only when Jesus is recognized as being really what Paul presupposes Him to be and what all the Gospels represent Him as being – the eternal Son of God,

come to earth for the redemption of man, now seated once more on the throne of His glory, and working in the hearts of His disciples through His Spirit, as only God can work. Such a solution was never so unpopular as it is to-day. Acceptance of it will involve a Copernican revolution in many departments of human thought and life.”<sup>29</sup>

To summarize, when it comes to types of literary parallels, we have 3 categories:

- 1.) abstract or imperfect or alleged or seeming parallel – passages appear similar, but may be out of context;
- 2.) specific or applied parallel – direct organic literary connection provided the parallels, a relationship of dependence shown by word for word similarity and similar content or ideas;<sup>7</sup>
- 3.) true or exact parallel-source and derivation – literary connection flowing in a particular direction can be significant or devoid of significance if a result of broad commonalities.

We have 7 ways (at least) to avoid “parallelomania”:

1. detailed study of the contexts, not simply juxtaposing excerpts. The content of each piece needs to be studied in light of its own literary context;
2. awareness of what is distinctive from broad commonalities from Scripture;
3. awareness of chronology (especially, ancient sources should first be dated by their earliest manuscripts not their theoretical origin);
4. demonstration of channels through which influences happened;
5. awareness of difference of terms or vocabulary versus ideas or content or meaning;
6. consideration of likelihood of borrowing in light of nature of belief system – exclusive vs. inclusive;
7. remembering the strength of the writer – such as historical, theological, apologetical, homiletical before determining any likelihood of borrowing.

Practicing such wise rules in order to avoid parallelomania has always characterized evangelical exegesis. That is, until recently. What was once true of the history of religion school is now being practiced in evangelicalism itself. Recently, some evangelicals have embraced the principle of correlation. Peter Enns has written a thoughtful treatise, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, summarizing some of these current methodologies, proposing not only that the biblical writers addressed their ancient world and used vocabulary or terms of their ancient world (as his predecessor at Westminster Theological Seminary J. Gresham Machen would agree), but also that the Scripture is *best* explained by its ancient environment. As a matter of fact, he argues, we should not expect the Bible to rise above Ancient Near Eastern standards. The New Testament is similar to other Second Temple texts not only in interpretive methods but also in use of legendary traditions. Ancient simple peoples composed stories that were appropriate standards for their own time, although we, from a scientific perspective, would find these stories inaccurate and untrue. Such indisputable evidence should not be ignored or dismissed because of theological presuppositions.<sup>30</sup>

All of us evangelicals would agree that, since we have a historical faith, historical context is relevant and important.<sup>31</sup> The question is this, to paraphrase Enns, do we *not* “honor the Lord” *nor* “uphold the gospel by playing make-believe” when theology is more important than so-called evidence?<sup>32</sup> Rather, is it not true that theology or presuppositions drive the way so-called evidence is perceived or used? Of course, all historiography has a perspective,<sup>33</sup> but that does not make such a perspective automatically false. The question to answer is, which perspective is accurate? Is harmony really a “distortion of the highest order,”<sup>34</sup> or is it an application of the truth that God is true? Enns suggests that Christ’s incarnation is analogous to Scripture’s “incarnation.”<sup>35</sup> For God to reveal himself means that he accommodates himself.<sup>36</sup> But, if Jesus can become incarnate without sin (2 Cor 5:21), can not God’s revelation become incarnate without falsehood?

Once we accept the premise that apostolic hermeneutics is “*best* explained by bearing in

mind the Second Temple world in which they thought and wrote,”<sup>37</sup> we may end up no longer being “accurate” scholars and, I believe, having that childlike trust in a revelation from God which is accurate too. I would like to present several examples in which recent evangelical scholars have not avoided “parallelomania” because they adopted the presupposition that the writers of Scripture can not rise above their own ancient environment.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul writes that the Israelites “all drank the same spiritual drink; for they were drinking from a spiritual accompanying rock, and the rock was Christ.” Liberal and some recent evangelical commentators mention that “other Second Temple texts refer to a mobile source of water accompanying the Israelites through the desert.”<sup>38</sup> They “all have in common” the “notion of mobility.” Because Paul in a “brief, offhand” way comments “about a moveable rock speaks to the existence, in some form, of a ‘moveable well’ tradition already in Paul’s day.” Even though the other Second Temple texts “are later than Paul,” they “are too elaborate to have been caused by Paul’s incidental comment.” Early interpreters “may have equated” Exodus 17 and Numbers 20: “Both Paul and the other texts are witnesses to an interpretive tradition that preceded both of them.” Paul Christianizes this Old Testament story. Therefore, by this reasoning, Paul “beyond a reasonable doubt” has used not just the Old Testament, but the interpretive tradition of his time.<sup>39</sup>

By beginning with the premise that apostolic hermeneutics is “*best explained*” by the Second Temple world in which the apostles thought and wrote they have ended up positing:

- a) Paul may have equated Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, thereby creating an error, from a scientific perspective;
- b) Paul borrowed from a tradition for which we have no clear basis;
- c) Paul used human words, not God’s revelation.

However, if we begin from the bases that

- a) we must first understand a text in its own literary context before we search for any possible sources;
- b) the Old Testament and/or God’s direct revelation are more likely sources than other Second Temple references for the content of the Bible;
- c) we assume a text is consistent and accurate unless proved otherwise (and certainly a text which claims to be God’s written revelation);
- d) yet keep in mind that God’s truth may not only be found in the Bible but could also be found in other ancient texts, what do we learn?

1. We can all agree that 1 Corinthians 10:4 is a difficult text to understand. How can you drink from a rock? How can a rock accompany you? How can a rock be God? However, if we believe our God created our incredibly complex universe, certainly God is capable of communicating a subtle message in God’s written revelation. Many commentators agree on the central point of 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:31: “Stand firm in the face of temptation.”<sup>40</sup> Food and drink are recurring topics in chapters 9 & 10: the apostles have the right to receive food and drink, Christ provided food and drink to the Israelites, the Israelites ate food and drink in their idolatry, the food and drink of communion is communion with Christ, and believers should not drink and eat food offered to idols, unless they are not told about its previous use. In summary, Paul ends, “whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, everything do to God’s glory” (1 Cor 10:31). By doing acts to God’s glory we can correctly use food and drink.

2. The Old Testament has several potential sources for Paul’s basic reference. The Old Testament refers to several similar incidents:

A. In Exodus 17:1-7, having left the wilderness of Sin, the Hebrews were in Rephidim. They had manna to eat (16:35), but no water. God tells Moses to take his rod (and the elders in the Masoretic text) and God says (according to the Septuagint): “Behold I myself have stood (perfect tense) there before you upon the rock (*petra*) in Choreb, and having smitten the rock, then water will come out of it and the people will drink” (LXX).

The Hebrew reads: “Behold I am standing (participle) before your face, there upon the rock (*sur*) in Horeb, and you shall smite the rock and there will go out from it water and the people may drink” (17:6a).

B. According to Numbers 20:1-11 in the wilderness of Zin in Kadesh, the Hebrews again had no water. God tells Moses again to take his rod and Aaron this time and “speak to the rock before them and it will give its water and you will bring to them water from the rock and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” Moses, this time, claims Moses and Aaron themselves must bring the people water, and, instead of speaking to the rock, strikes the rock two times with his rod “and much water came out and the congregation drank and their cattle” (LXX).

C. Numbers 21:16 describes the Israelites coming to a well in Arnon near Moab of which the Lord said to Moses: “Gather the people and I will give them water to drink.” Israel sang at the well. Then the Israelites traveled from place to place, ending in “the valley in Moab” (vv.17-19). A rock is mentioned (*lazeuo*- “top of what was hewn in stone,” v.19 LXX).

The Second Temple texts seem to refer to the Numbers 21:16 event. *Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities*, which is hypothetically written in the first century A.D., though its oldest manuscript is from the eleventh century, refers to a “well of water” the Lord “brought forth” “to follow them.” It “followed them in the wilderness 40 years and went up to the mountain with them and went down into the plains” (10:7; 11:15). It speaks of a well. Then, instead of the *Israelites* traveling from place to place, the *well* travels from place to place.

*Targum Onqelos to Numbers 21:16-19*, which is tentatively dated to the third century A.D., also refers to Numbers 21:16. It speaks of a well given to the Hebrews, “which the princes dug” which “went down with them to the valleys, and from the valleys it went up with them to the high country.”

*The Tosefta* (dated probably also third century) seems the most elaborate of these references. It refers to Numbers 21 but also refers to a “rock” that would rise up onto the mountains and go down into the valleys (Sukkah 3:11). In the second century Rabbi Jose ben Judah added that the Well was conferred upon Israel for the “merit of Miriam,” one of the three good leaders or shepherds of Israel (in addition to Moses and Aaron, b. Ta’anith 9a).

Paul, in contrast, does not appear to refer to Numbers 21 at all, but to Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, but especially to Psalm 78, which summarizes both events. In Psalm 78:15-16, God “split rocks open in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. He made streams come out of the rock, and caused waters to flow down like rivers” (Ps 78:15-16 NRSV). Psalm 78 has a similar main point to the one that Paul has: the Hebrews did not believe God’s miracles. Paul tells the Corinthians also not to put Christ to the test: Watch out lest you fall (1 Cor 10:9, 12; Ps 78:32, 42). Both texts refer to the ancestors’ example (Ps 78:48; 1 Cor 10:1), the cloud and the sea (Ps 78:13, 14, 23; 1 Cor 10:2), eating food (Ps 78:24-25, 29; 1 Cor 10:3), drinking (Ps 78:15; 1 Cor 10:4), a rock (Ps 78:15, 16, 20; 1 Cor 10:4), the people who desired evil (Ps 78:29-30; 1 Cor 10:6). However, God appears to have Paul use as his central hermeneutic Exodus 17:5: “Behold I am standing there...upon the rock” as the basis for “the rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4). God is clearly identified as accompanying the Israelites by the use of the participle, and God is identified with the rock. This is a statement for the pre-existence and divinity of Christ. Christ, the rock, accompanied the Hebrews.

In other words, 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 has a number of similarities to Psalm 78 (I found 7), whereas it has many less similarities to the other Second Temple texts. In addition, chronologically Psalm 78 would precede 1 Corinthians 10, whereas the other Second Temple texts would follow 1 Corinthians 10.<sup>41</sup> Why could not Paul have used the Old Testament, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as his basis? The contexts of 1 Corinthians 10 and Psalm 78 are similar. Why then posit a theoretical tradition as Paul’s basis? In that case have we not allowed revelation to become subservient to accommodation? Evangelism must be incarnational, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (“to all



I have become all [things], in order that by all means I will [might] save some,” v.22b). Scripture, to be true to the Bible’s claims for itself, must be “resurrectional,” as the Apostle Peter explains: “for not by human will was prophecy ever borne (guided, *phero*), but rather by the Holy Spirit, being borne (guided), humans spoke from God” (2 Pet 1:21). God is the source. God used humans, but as Paul elaborates: “All Scripture is Godbreathed (*theopneustos*)” (2 Tim 3:16). God “breathes hard” and brings life to human words. Resurrection is a more primary image for Scripture than incarnation.

To summarize, we need to be wary of naturalistic explanations of the *content* of God’s revelation because that would make the biblical writers false witnesses and undermine the Bible’s unique, authoritative, exclusive, historical claims to be God’s revelation.

Other difficult texts to understand are Jude 9 and 14. Some scholars claim that the “extracanonical origin” of Jude reporting that the archangel Michael disputed with the devil about Moses’ body (Jude 9) is “beyond debate.”<sup>42</sup> Early interpreters “invented” a story to explain Deuteronomy 34:6, “To this day no one knows where [Moses’] grave is.”<sup>43</sup> Clement of Alexandria and Didymus attributed the source to the *Assumption of Moses*, whereas Origen attributed it to the *Ascension of Moses*.<sup>44</sup> These may be two different manuscripts. However, the sole extant copy of the *Testament of Moses* dates from the sixth century A.D. The Testament is theoretically dated in the first century, later than or contemporaneous with Jude. Nowhere does it include a reference to Michael disputing with the devil. James Charlesworth, although a more “liberal” scholar, cautiously concludes that the episode may be contained in the lost ending of the Testament but “our present information does not warrant any positive conclusion.” Moreover, he adds, “the contexts” of the Testament and Jude “are quite different.”<sup>45</sup> The Testament is written as a dialogue between Moses and Joshua, whereas Jude is a letter written to a specific group of believers. Roman Catholic scholar Daniel Harrington also concludes that “we cannot be certain whether [*The Testament of Moses*] contained the account of Moses’ death and burial.”<sup>46</sup> Earl J. Richard says “one can only speculate about the exact source and its wording.”<sup>47</sup> How, then, can we evangelicals conclude without doubt that the source is “beyond debate” and its account is “invented”!

Jude appears to cite the noncanonical 1 Enoch 1:9 when he writes: “Enoch, seventh from Adam, prophesied also to these, saying, ‘Behold the Lord came (*elthen*) with his myriad holy angels<sup>48</sup> to do justice against all and to convict every living being concerning all their ungodly deeds which they committed and concerning all the harsh things which ungodly sinners spoke against him’” (vv.14-15). Jude 14-15 is a close paraphrase of 1 Enoch 1:9, but 1 Enoch is primarily known from a 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript. However, among the Dead Sea Scrolls were found fragments of this verse, including the phrase: “myriads of holy ones...deeds” (4Q201.II). The basic idea of the Lord returning with his holy ones to judge and convict the ungodly can be found also in:

- a) Deuteronomy 33:2: “The Lord...came with myriads of holy ones”;
- b) Daniel 7:9-10: “Thousands upon thousands attended” “the Ancient of Days” and “the books were opened”;
- c) Zechariah 14:5: “Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him”;
- d) Matthew 25:31: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne”;
- e) and 1 Thessalonians 3:13: “When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”

Both 1 Chronicles 1:1-3 and Luke 3:37-38 cite Enoch as the “seventh from Adam.” We do not need 1 Enoch 60:8 for that data. Thus, the content of Jude 14-15 could have come from any combination of these biblical verses. The question is, why did Jude give credit to the Enoch of Genesis 5:18-24? Certainly, Enoch’s time had “ungodly sinners,” similar to Jude’s time. By Genesis 6:5-6 the Lord is grieved at humanity’s wickedness because the human heart was evil. Was Jude indeed citing some earlier version of 1 Enoch or did he get a special revelation from God the Father or God the Son, Jude’s own human brother? We do not know.

We might respond that the Bible quotes a variety of noncanonical sources<sup>49</sup> when these sources

say something true because all truth is God's truth (as John 1:9 relates, the true Light—Jesus—enlightens every human). But Peter Enns counters that “the real issue is not that we have a canonical author citing a noncanonical text authoritatively.”<sup>50</sup> The “real issue” to him is that early interpreters developed traditions that filled in the “gaps” of an “attractive biblical figure,” such as Enoch.<sup>51</sup> In other words, because we can find apocryphal writings that appear to fill in the gaps of either attractive biblical figures or of mysterious biblical statements,<sup>52</sup> therefore, the authors of the Bible *must* have done the same. But, if they did do the same—invented stories for the curious—would not they and would not we find these invented stories to be less than fully authoritative? Where do we draw the line? What parts of the Bible are accurate and true and authoritative for us today and which parts are *not* accurate and true and authoritative today? Thomas D. Lea in his essay on “Pseudonymity and the New Testament” has for me carefully shown that pseudonymity was not valued by the New Testament writers and early Christians.<sup>53</sup> As Paul warns, in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, do not be deceived by letters that purport to come from Paul, Silvanus, or Timothy. Look for the sign of authenticity, the personal handwritten greeting (3:17). When Eusebius summarized the arguments for the canon, he classified among the “disputed books” a) those which were “true, genuine, and recognized” from b) those which were not canonical but familiar from c) those which were pseudonymous, to which no “churchman of any generation” ever saw fit to refer (Eusebius, *History* III. 25).

Ancients valued truth and accuracy. Lucian, who lived in the second century A.D., declared, “The historian’s sole task is to tell the tale as it happened” (*How to Write History* 39). He cites Thucydides from the fifth century B.C., who said: “he is writing a prize-essay for the occasion, that he does not welcome fiction (*muthodes*) but is leaving to posterity the true account of what happened” (*How to Write History* 42). Colin J. Hemer cites Polybius, who “explodes with indignation against” Timaeus, who “actually invents speeches.” Timaeus thereby “destroys the peculiar virtue of history.” Polybius “concedes that it is the part of politicians to say what the occasion demands, but it is not for historians to display their creative abilities.”<sup>54</sup> Lucian makes a similar point by describing historians as sculptors: “they certainly never manufactured their own gold or silver or ivory or their other material;...they confined themselves to fashioning it, sawing the ivory, polishing, glueing, aligning it, setting it off with the gold, and their art lay in handling their material properly” (*How to Write History* 50).

Jewish historians had a similar ideal, “historical veracity” (*Against Apion* I.5 [26]). About the Scriptures, Josephus said Jews regard them as the “decrees of God,” which, even if ancient, “no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable” (*Against Apion* I.8 [42]). Philo refers to Exodus 23:1a, “You shall not spread a false report,” as the basis for careful and accurate study of the facts (*The Confusion of Tongues* XXVII [140]).

My point is *not* that all ancients were inerrant historians, but rather that the contemporary standards of scientific historiography (fact, impartiality, objectivity, accuracy) were also positive standards in ancient times.

My goal in this essay was to remind us of the importance of using methods of interpretation that support, not undermine, the truth of God’s exclusive and unique revelation. A false basis does not result in truth. Parallelomania can undermine the uniqueness of God’s revelation. The Bible can not be explained solely on the basis of its environment, as if the Bible’s revelation were made of massive sponges drawing in the liquid surpluses of that ancient environment. Although in Christianity God’s revelation enters historical environments and God’s truth is revealed to individual people, God’s revelation remains true, without falsehood, despite its use of human vessels.

The Bible spoke to its generation and used sound methodologies that also communicated to its generation. All truth is God’s truth. But revelation should be seen as primary, rather than accommodating, when one is seeking to understand the Scriptures. The content and ideas of the biblical writers are true. God is capable of communicating truth and complexity to humans. If God

is true and the source of all truth, then all of God's Word should be true, historically consistent, accurate, authentic, and reliable. Not only is the origin and truth of Christianity important to uphold but also carefulness and accuracy of scholarship. That is why we need continually to evaluate our exegetical methods to make sure we have not undermined the truth of God's written revelation and in this way we will humbly do our exegesis, as we do all our other acts, "to God's glory" (1 Cor 10:3).

(Endnotes)

\* An abbreviated version of this paper originally was presented at the Nov. 15-17, 2006 Other Voices in Interpretation Study Group of the national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society.

1 Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* LXXXI: 1 (March 1962): 1.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. See also Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case." *JBL* 127:2 (Summer 2008): 246-55.

4 Sandmel: 2.

5 Sandmel: 3.

6 Sandmel: 4.

7 Sandmel: 5.

8 Sandmel: 5, 6.

9 Sandmel: 7.

10 Sandmel: 13.

11 J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1925), 4.

12 Machen, 6.

13 Machen, 9.

14 Machen, 313.

15 Machen, 238.

16 Ibid.

17 Machen, 241.

18 Ibid.

19 Machen, 255.

20 Machen, 9, 225.

21 Machen, 262, 272.

22 Machen, 260.

23 Machen, 238.

24 Machen, 314.

25 Machen, 13.

26 Machen, 261.

27 Ibid.

28 See also Gal 1:11-12, 16-17; 1 Cor 2:10 and John Jefferson Davis, *Handbook of Basic Bible Texts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), ch. 1.

29 Machen, 312.

30 Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 40-41, 45, 52, 152, 155, 171. For a similar view, see Iain Provan, "How Can I Understand, Unless Someone Explains It to Me?" (Acts 8:30-31): Evangelicals and Biblical Hermeneutics, *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 17:1 (2007): 16-20. The Westminster Theological Seminary's board expressed concern over Enns's book (see Sarah Pulliam, "Westminster Theological Suspension," *Christianity Today* 52:6 [June 2008]: 17-18).

31 Enns, 48.

<sup>32</sup> Enns, 52, 171-2.

<sup>33</sup> Enns, 66.

<sup>34</sup> Enns, 65.

<sup>35</sup> Enns, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Enns, 107.

<sup>37</sup> Enns, 155.

<sup>38</sup> Enns, 150-1.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Enns (150-1) agrees with higher critic Hans Conzelmann that “Paul sets out from a Jewish haggadic tradition” in which “the rock becomes peripatetic,” *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 166-7;

David E. Garland also says: Paul may have “incorporated a traditional Jewish interpretation of the following rock, but he gives it a uniquely Christian twist,” *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 456. Even though Gordon Fee notes that Paul refers to the “rock,” while the rabbinic traditions referred to the “well” in Num 21, he concludes that “Paul seems to be referring to a common tradition of the continual supply of water,” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 448; Anthony C. Thiselton writes that “it is clearly and widely recognized that *Paul informs his own Christology by drawing explicitly on traditions of preexistent Wisdom from the OT Wisdom literature ...and hellenistic Judaism of the first century*,” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 728; Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer conclude: “That the wording of [1 Cor 10:4] has been influenced by the Jewish legend about a rock following the Israelites in their wanderings and supplying them with water, is hardly doubtful; but that the Apostle believed the legend is very doubtful....St Paul seems to take up this Rabbinic fancy and give it a spiritual meaning,” *The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911), 201; C.K. Barrett is more nuanced when he writes that the “references to the well of water in Num xx.ii; xxi.16 seem to have led to the belief (within Judaism) that the well (provided by the rock) accompanied Israel on their journeys.” “By adapting these identifications Paul interprets Christ in terms of the wisdom of Hellenistic Judaism,” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968), 222-3; Simon Kistemaker assumes that “Paul was acquainted with” the legendary Rabbinic “material on the rock that supplied water for the Israelites and traveled with them during their forty-year journey,” but he “is interested, however, not in a legend but in God’s miraculous provision of food and drink,” *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 324; Alan F. Johnson concludes that “Paul was not alluding to” the “rabbinic traditions that mention a movable, rock-shaped well that rolled along with the Israelites in their journeying” because the rabbinic traditions “speak of an accompanying stream of water, not the rock itself” and possibly “Paul understood the rock to be the source of both the Israelites’ food and drink,” *1 Corinthians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 157; Charles Hodge concurs that “According to the local tradition, as old at least as the Koran, the rock smitten by Moses was not part of the mountain, but a detached rock,...This view of the passage makes the apostle responsible for a Jewish fable, and is inconsistent with his divine authority,” *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 174.

<sup>40</sup> Enns, 149.

<sup>41</sup> Enns mentions that some scholars conclude that Paul’s statement cannot be connected in any meaningful way with these later texts since Paul could not have copied from the Tosefta and Targum texts written generations, even centuries, after Paul lived, 150.

<sup>42</sup> Enns, 145.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Richard J. Bauckham, *WBC 50: Jude, 2 Peter* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 73.

<sup>45</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 924.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP 15 (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 209.

<sup>47</sup> Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 272. John Calvin suggests that the Jews handed down “some historical facts not committed to writing,” *Calvin’s Commentaries: Ephesians-Jude* (Wilmington: Associated Publishers, n.d.), 2621. See

also p. 2622 on Jude 14.

<sup>48</sup> “Myriad holy angels” has slightly better support than “myriad holy ones”: p<sup>72</sup>, the earliest Greek manuscript for Jude (3-4th century), Alexandrian text type, plus codex Sinaiticus (4th century Alexandrian), and *psi* (9-10th century Byzantine) as opposed to B, i.e., codex Vaticanus (4th century Alexandrian), plus A (5th century Byzantine) and C (5th century mixed Alexandrian and Byzantine).

<sup>49</sup> E.g. Acts 17:28 (Stoic Aratus, *Phainomena* 5, said “for of him also we are family”); Tit 1:12 (Epimenides, *de Oraculis*); Num 21:14’s *Book of the Wars of the Lord*.

<sup>50</sup> Enns, 146.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

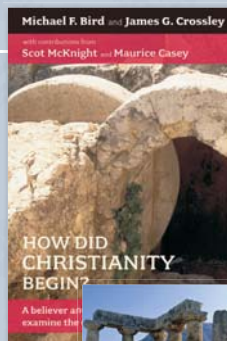
<sup>52</sup> Enns, 145.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas D. Lea, “Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, David Alan Black and David S. Dockery, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 535-9.

<sup>54</sup> Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), 75.

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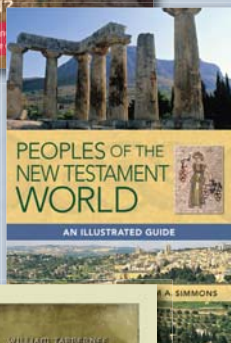
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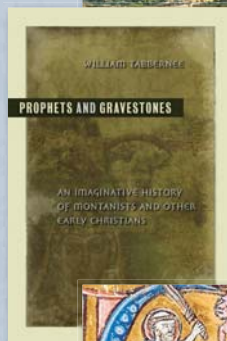
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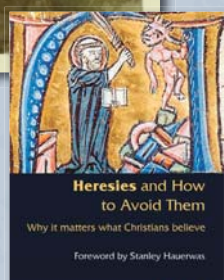
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Por Alvin Padilla. Augsburg Fortress Press. 2007.

Alvin Padilla ha escrito un comentario sobre el Evangelio Según San Lucas en la serie editada por Justo González, *Conozca su Biblia*, que va ser muy útil en las manos de la audiencia por la cual fue escrita: líderes laicos en iglesias Latinas en los Estados Unidos. El contenido es muy accesible en tono y lenguaje con bastante descripción de trasfondo histórico y teológico que ayudara el lector y la lectora entender el mensaje básico de Lucas en todas sus diferentes partes.

La estructura del comentario es tradicional, con una introducción que incluye una descripción del papel único de Lucas entre los cuatro evangelios, incluso el hecho de que Lucas tiene mucho material que no se contiene en ninguna de los otros dos Evangelios Sinópticos (Marcos y Mateo). Padilla presenta que tal material, concentrado en Lucas 9-19, indica el énfasis que Lucas tiene sobre el plan salvífico de Dios. También único de este Evangelio es que tiene un segundo volumen, El Libro de Hechos, escrito por el mismo autor y con temas similares en ambos.

Luego de esta introducción con los datos básicos de la estructura del Evangelio, su paternidad literaria, audiencia y propósito, Padilla prosigue a analizar la primera parte del Evangelio, o sea, las circunstancias alrededor del anuncio y nacimiento de Jesús y Juan el Bautista (Lc 1.1-2.52). En el capítulo dos del comentario, Padilla discute las secciones de Lucas donde el autor describe la preparación ministerial de Jesús, incluso el ministerio precursor de Juan el Bautista y las experiencias iniciales de Jesús – su bautismo en el mar de Galilea y su tentación en el desierto. Esta parte también incluye una genealogía demostrando la trayectoria humana, judía, y davídica de Jesús, como un “segundo Adán,” dice Padilla. En gran parte, los comentarios de Padilla son muy bien elaborado en estas secciones, pero su discusión del propósito de la genealogía, aunque correcto en lo que se dice, es bien breve. Hay otros momentos así en el comentario, donde el lector se queda esperando por mas. No hay duda que la naturaleza concisa de esta serie de comentarios publicado por Augsburg Fortress Press no permite largas elaboraciones de varios temas. La clave esta en cuales pasajes escoger para comentarios más extensos. Por lo general, Padilla escoge muy bien las partes del Evangelio que merecen mayor comentario.

El corazón de Lucas consiste en las tres secciones a las cuales Padilla dedica la mayor parte de su comentario – el comienzo y desarrollo del ministerio de enseñanza y sanidad que Jesús lleva a cabo en su región natal de Galilea (4.14-9.50), la ya mencionada sección que contiene material (sanidades, dichos, eventos) que solo se consiguen en Lucas, durante el viaje de Jesús por ultima vez a Jerusalén (9.51-19.44), y los eventos en Jerusalén, incluso la crucifixión y resurrección de Jesús (19.45-24.53). En la sección del 9 al 19, Padilla argumenta que el tema de la naturaleza del discipulado domina en los varios pasajes. En la ultima parte, del 19 al 24, es interesante no solo como Lucas demuestra que el plan salvífico de Dios se cumple en Jesucristo, pero como también el autor prepara el lector y la lectora para lo que sigue – la era de los comienzos de la iglesia, bajo el liderato de los apóstoles. Padilla nota este énfasis en sus comentarios sobre esta sección.

La fuerza de este comentario por Alvin Padilla consiste en sus descripciones del trasfondo de muchas de las prácticas y costumbres discutidas en el Evangelio Según San Lucas. Por ejemplo, Padilla explica muy bien algunas de las practicas judías que están en el trasfondo de las acciones de Zacarías, Elizabeth, María, Simeón y Ana en esos primeros capítulos del Evangelio. También Padilla usa un lenguaje bastante accesible para explicar algunos de los detalles más complejos del Evangelio, incluso preguntas exegéticas sobre alguna inconsistencia textual o histórica. Padilla explica las opciones en forma concisa, y por la mayor parte ofrece la mejor opción en su opinión, aunque a veces deja que el lector decida por su mismo, sin dar alguna opinión. Un ejemplo de tal acercamiento es la discusión sobre la frase “blasfemia del Espíritu Santo” en Lucas 12.8-12, un pasaje bastante difícil y muy mal aplicado en nuestros días, pero Padilla toma su tiempo para

explicar las opciones de interpretación y ofrecer quizás la mejor, que la frase se refiere al rechazo por completo de la presencia de Dios en la vida de uno, donde obviamente, por lo tanto, el Espíritu Santo no hace presencia (paginas 102-03).

En algunas ocasiones, sin embargo, Padilla toma mucho espacio de su escrito para tratar de explicar algo que quizás no tenga una explicación histórica, sino depende de la licencia poética del autor del Evangelio de Lucas, quien representa unos de los escritores de más consciencia y estilo literario en todo el Nuevo Testamento. Por ejemplo, Padilla trata de explicar la discrepancia de la fecha del censo imperial que Lucas ofrece en el nacimiento de Jesús, versus la evidencia histórica fuera del Nuevo Testamento (paginas 17-18). No hay explicación histórica suficientemente convincente, pero para Lucas mas importante es demostrar el ambiente imperial y dominante en el cual nace Jesús, el príncipe de la paz, que conseguir una exactitud cronológica.

No obstante este es un comentario que vale la pena obtener, estudiar y utilizar en los estudios bíblicos de la iglesia local, institutos bíblicos de entrenamiento ministerial y programa de seminarios que trabajan con hispanos. Es conciso, claro y comprensivo. Padilla podría haber hecho más hincapiés sobre las enseñanzas de justicia social que el Evangelio de Lucas contiene e enfatiza, pero sin embargo los temas espirituales de salvación, perdón y la obra única de nuestro Señor Jesucristo sobresalen en este comentario. Aplicaciones practicas y contemporáneas de algunas de los pasajes claves en Lucas son pocas, pero Padilla mantiene el énfasis en la tarea esencial de aclarar los detalles del contenido de cada pasaje para ayuda al lector llegar a sus propias conclusiones teológicas, éticas y eclesiásticas. Algún resumen o conclusión final luego de cada capitulo podría ayudar al lector recordar los temas principales de cada sección en Lucas, pero quizás esto haría el comentario muy largo para ser útil para su audiencia. El lector o lectora de este comentario será premiado por su cuidadosa lectura pasaje por pasaje de este muy excelente comentario por el profesor Alvin Padilla.

Efraín Agosto, Ph.D., es Profesor de Nuevo Testamento y Decano Académico en Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut.

# Global Voices on Biblical Equality

Women and Men  
Ministering Together  
in the Church

**edited by**

Aída Besançon Spencer,  
William David Spencer,  
and Mimi Haddad

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## Global Voices on Biblical Equality

Women and Men Ministering Together in the Church



EDITED BY

AÍDA BESANÇON SPENCER  
WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER  
MIMI HADDAD

*Global Voices on Biblical Equality* is a fresh look at the contextualizing of gender equality throughout the world. Biblical equality is a burgeoning, global reform movement led by scholars and leaders not only in North America but also on every continental landmass in the world. What inroads is biblical equality making around the globe? What is its appeal? What still needs reform? How is biblical equality transforming each culture? In this book, female and male writers who are ethnically part of every continent explore the contextual challenges, successes, and adaptations of engaging the biblical text on gender and ministry.

**The editors of this volume are** Aída Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad.

**Other contributors include** John Runyon (Associate Director for Enrollment Management and adjunct professor), CUME graduates Darin Vincent Poullard and Eliana Marques Runyon, and GCTS Hamilton graduates Matthew D. Kim, Sandra Gatlin Whitley, Awilda Gonzalez-Tejera, Beulah Wood, and others.

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on Finding Healing and Wholeness  
in God's Love

LESLIE ANN MCKINNEY

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Leslie Ann McKinney is a GCTS Hamilton graduate and a former CUME Athanasius Scholar. She serves as Pastor of Community at Pilgrim Church of Beverly, Massachusetts.

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LESLIE ANN  
MCKINNEY

# Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home

Raising Voices for Change

EDITED BY

KROEGER, CATHERINE CLARK

NASON-CLARK, NANCY

AND FISHER-TOWNSEND, BARBARA

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This volume presents an accurate, faith-based analysis of abuse in the Christian family context. The contributors come from various faith traditions, work in different contexts, and see the issue in part based on their own narrative and training. Yet, despite their differences, they are unanimous that violence has no place in the home. Every home should be a safe place; every home a shelter. When abuse occurs in families of faith, it is the responsibility of the church to offer compassion and support to victims and to call those who act abusively to accountability and justice.

Dr. Kroeger is a professor teaching at CUME and Hamilton GCTS campuses.

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## Beyond Abuse in the Christian Home

Raising Voices for Change



EDITED BY  
CATHERINE CLARK KROEGER  
NANCY NASON-CLARK  
BARBARA FISHER-TOWNSEND

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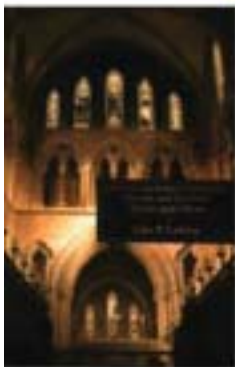


*Standing on His Promises: Finding Comfort, Hope, and Purpose in the Midst of your Storm* is a moving story of Joan Blake's journey from her island home of Trinidad and Tobago to attend college and work in America. She expresses the joys and challenges of being a wife and mother, and shows by her personal testimonies that even when life deals out times of sorrow, we can find comfort, hope and purpose by resting in God. This book can be used for personal as well as group study.

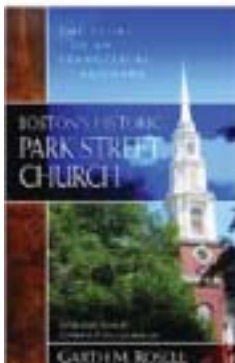
Joan M. Blake is president and founder of Christian Resource Network Inc, and editor of the *Christian Connection Newsletter*. She graduated from CUME in 2004 with a Master of Arts degree with a major in women's ministry. She volunteers as a mentor for students in CUME's mentored ministry program and has served as an Athanasius Scholar with Professor William Spencer's Theology classes. ([www.keytolifepublishingcompany.com](http://www.keytolifepublishingcompany.com))



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*Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers Then and Now* is an examination of the ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11. We know that Jesus gave all of these ministries to the first-century church. This book seeks to answer the question: Does He still give all of them to the church today? John Lathrop graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Center for Urban Ministerial Education in 2003 with an M.A. in Urban Ministry. ([www.xulonpress.com](http://www.xulonpress.com))



Gordon P. Hugenburger (Ph.D.) is Ranked Adjunct Professor of Old Testament and Senior Minister at Park Street Church, Boston, MA. Garth M. Rosell is Professor of Church History at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.



*Teologia Sistemática: uma análise histórica, bíblica e apologética para o contexto atual* (São Paulo, Edições Vida Nova, Nov 2007) is written by Franklin Ferreira and Alan Myatt. ([www.vidanova.com](http://www.vidanova.com))

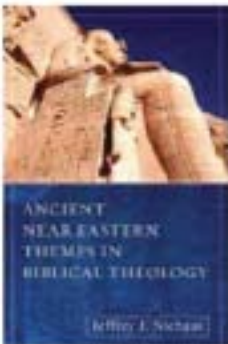
Alan Myatt, Ph.D., is currently Assistant Professor of Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary - Charlotte, where he teaches systematic theology. After a decade of teaching theology at seminaries in Brazil, he taught courses in the Portuguese language at CUME in the areas of theology and religions.

Franklin Ferreira, Th.M., serves as a pastor and conference speaker.



*Antioch Agenda* is edited by Daniel Jeyaraj, Robert W. Pazmiño and Rodney L. Petersen. Rodney Petersen, Ph.D., is a supervisor with the Africanus Guild and Executive Director of the Boston Theological Institute, Contributors Todd M. Johnson and Timothy C. Tennent serve at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

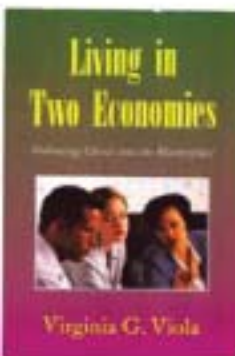
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Douglas Stuart, Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary



After graduating from Smith College and later Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Ginny has been a part of several entrepreneurial ventures in both small business and ministry around the Boston area. For 15 years, Ginny was part of a network of lay people in Boston seeking to integrate personal faith and daily life at work as Christ-followers in the marketplace. This journey together changed the way all of us go to work. Ginny has served on the board of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA and as an elder at Park Street Church in downtown Boston, where she lives with her husband Joe, an internist with the Brigham & Women's hospital.